

Pacquiao-Larios tickets to cost as much as \$1,000

ABS-CBN reports 62% drop in 2005 net income

Cebu rejects Cha-cha signature campaign for people's initiative

Complete list of 2005 successful bar examinees

Slain cop wrote open letter chiding Pasig colleagues

By Lulge A. del Puerto and Tarra V. Quismundo

BEFORE HE WAS GUNNED DOWN IN A DARING, daylight attack, Chief Insp. Renato Marasigan had written an open letter to colleagues in the Pasig "ELITE" Police Brotherhood Association Inc.

"The glory that we have managed to enjoy for almost two decades... has plummeted to zero level," said the slain deputy chief of the Police In-

SLAIN/A8

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PHILIPPINE DAILY INQUIRER

BALANCED NEWS, FEARLESS VIEWS

Friday, March 31, 2006

10 sections / Vol. 21 / No. 113 P18

website: www.inq7.net

4 lawyers' groups seek disbarment of Gonzalez

By Armand N. Nocum

FOUR LAWYERS' GROUPS are seeking the suspension and eventual disbarment of Justice Secretary Raul Gonzalez on the grounds that he allegedly committed acts "inimical to the ad-



4 LAWYERS/A28

UP tops bar exams again; JDV niece is No. 1

By Armand N. Nocum and Leila S. Salaverria

JOAN A. DE VENECIA SAYS SHE WANTS to change the world.

The University of the Philippines College of Law valedictorian has taken the first step toward her goal, topping the list

of 1,526 examinees who passed last year's bar examinations, the results of which were released last night by the Supreme Court.

The scion of a politically influential family scored 87.20 percent in the examinations, which saw a record passing rate of 27.2 percent. Two other UP graduates

also topped the exams. Three examinees from Ateneo also landed in the top 10.

The 25-year-old De Venecia is the daughter of former Judge Antonio de Venecia, elder brother of House Speaker Jose de Venecia.

The other top 10 finishers were Jomini Nazareno of the Ateneo de Manila Law

School (2nd, 86.40); Sheryl May B. Tanquilut (Ateneo, 85.95); Nyerson Dexter Tito Tualla (Manuel Luis Quezon University, 85.45); Tamsin Rae Lucila (UP, 85.35); Gladys Gervacio (University of Perpetual Help-Rizal, 85.30); Claudine B. Orocio-Isorena (UP, 85.20); Pedro



UP TOPS/A21 BAR TOPNOTCHER Joan de Venecia

GMA rides Cha-cha train

'It's time for old-time politicians to stand back or get run over'



By Gil C. Cabacungan Jr. and TJ Burgonio

PRESIDENT MACAPAGAL-ARROYO YESTERDAY PUT HER CARDS on the table and endorsed the controversial people's initiative to amend the 1987 Constitution.

"The true power of the people is being felt with the signature campaign to change our form of government. The old-time politicians of the status quo better stand back because this train has left the station. It is time for politicians to stand back or get run over," Ms Arroyo said in a speech at the World Bank-sponsored Philippines Development Forum in Tagaytay City.

The President disclosed her position on the people's initiative even before the Supreme Court could settle the legal questions surrounding the exercise and the Commission on

Elections could determine whether the signature drive by Sigaw ng Bayan had complied with the required 12 percent of the total registered voters and 3 percent in each legislative district.

After the President's declaration, her Cabinet and advisers took turns defending the people's initiative after days of denying involvement in it.

In a statement, Press Secretary Ignacio Bunye said: "It is time for us to cross the Rubicon."

"We have achieved momentum. Let us not

GMA RIDES/A19

JDV sees 'interim parliament' by July

By Michael Lim Ubac

AN "INTERIM PARLIAMENT" WILL TAKE power as early as July to continue the process of amending the Constitution after the shift to a parliamentary system of government shall have been made, Speaker Jose de Venecia said yesterday.

In disclosing a timeline for Charter change through a people's initiative, De Venecia said the verification of the five million signatures expressing approval

for the shift to a parliamentary system would be completed by April 15.

He said this would be followed by a monthlong campaign to woo the support of the majority of the people, then a plebiscite in June to ratify the shift.

De Venecia said he expected an interim parliament to convene in July at the latest "to tackle the other key amendments." He said the June 2007 polls would push through to elect members of a new parliament.

Under Republic Act No. 6735, the act providing for a system of initiatives and referendums, the "proposition in an initiative on the Constitution" must be "approved by the majority of the votes cast in the plebiscite."

But a smaller number of people—12 percent of the total number of registered voters as signatories, with every legislative district represented by at least 3 percent of the voters—would be sufficient to

JDV SEES/A19

2 lawmakers hit Favila for calling jobless Pinoys choosy

By Michael Lim Ubac and Jerome Aning

TRADE SECRETARY PETER FAVILA IS EITHER "misinformed," or he has just "insulted" the millions of unemployed Filipinos, two party-list lawmakers said yesterday.

Representatives Joel Villanueva of Citizens Battle Against Corruption (Cibac) and Teodoro Casiño of Bayan Muna reacted strongly to Favila's claim Wednesday that many Filipinos were unemployed because they were choosy about jobs.

Villanueva said Favila's assessment "insults the millions of Filipinos who are treated as slaves abroad, working in dire conditions away from their loved ones, just to provide a decent life for their families."

He said the fact that teachers were willing to become domestic helpers,

2 LAWMAKERS/A8

WB FORECAST ON RP

Faster economic growth, but hunger also growing

By Doris C. Dumiao

THE WORLD BANK FORESEES FASTER economic growth for the Philippines and further improvement in the government's finances this year even as more Filipinos consider themselves to be poor and hungry.

In its twice-yearly outlook on East Asia, the World Bank said the Philippine economy was expected to grow 5.3 percent in 2006 and 5.6 percent in 2007 compared to 5.1 percent last year due to rising consumption fueled by strong remittances from overseas Filipino workers.

The World Bank's projected growth rate for the Philippine economy is slightly lower than the government's revised target range of growth of 5.5 to 6.2 percent this year.

The Washington-based bank also not-

ed that despite two years of Philippine economic growth, surveys showed that 17 percent of Filipinos reported suffering hunger compared to 12 percent last year and over 49 percent considered themselves impoverished compared to 48 percent in 2005.

"Recent surveys indicate that more Filipinos are suffering from hunger... suggesting that the positive growth performance in the last two years is not perceived to have been widely shared," the bank said in its report on the Philippines.

The Philippines is one of Asia's biggest importers of rice, its main food staple, due to its rapidly rising population and poor agricultural infrastructure.

Analysts estimate the Philippine economy needs to grow 7 to 8 percent per year to cut poverty significantly among its 85 million people. The population of

FASTER/A21



THE CARDINAL. A rousing welcome is given Gaudencio Cardinal Rosales, the archbishop of Manila, upon his arrival at the Nala on Thursday night from the Vatican, where with 14 other bishops, Pope Benedict XVI elevated him to the elite College of Cardinals which advises the Pope, and will someday elect his successor. The new prince of the Church will say a thanksgiving Mass tomorrow, April 1, at 10 a.m. with President Arroyo and other top officials scheduled to attend.

JESS YUSON

OFW bank for 'world's greatest workers'

By Christine O. Avendaño

PRESIDENT MACAPAGAL-ARROYO YESTERDAY announced plans to establish the first OFW bank as part of government efforts to help overseas Filipino workers remit their earnings conveniently through postal systems here and abroad, and at lower service rates.

The President said the "newest service" was an offering to "our new heroes and greatest workers in the

world," who sent a record high of \$11 billion in remittances to the country last year.

"So that we can help our OFWs in saving and sending their money back home, we will make the Philippine Postal Savings Bank (PPSB) an OFW bank," she said during a roundtable discussion with government officials in Malacañang.

The government-run PPSB will be renamed Philippine Overseas Postal Bank, according to its president Rolando

Macasaet. The new OFW bank will be operational in three to six months, he said.

Ms Arroyo said the Overseas Workers Welfare Administration (OWWA) would invest P1 billion in the modernization of the PPSB facilities.

Macasaet proposed the establishment of the OFW bank at Tuesday's Cabinet meeting and this was "approved by Cabinet members," the

FIRST OFW/A10

WEATHER FORECAST

FORECAST: Eastern, Central and Southern Luzon will experience mostly cloudy skies with scattered rainshowers while Southern Mindanao will have mostly cloudy skies with scattered rainshowers and isolated thunderstorms. The rest of the country will be partly cloudy to at times cloudy with isolated rainshowers or thunderstorms.

COMPILED BY KATE MEDRANO, PDI RESEARCH/03/31/06 SOURCE: PAGASA

E-mail: pr_news@inquirer.com.ph

Second FRONT PAGE

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Baguio	Partly Cloudy	General Santos	Partly Cloudy
Taguig	Partly Cloudy	Marikina	Partly Cloudy
Lasag	Partly Cloudy	San Jose	Partly Cloudy
Clark	Partly Cloudy	San Jose	Partly Cloudy
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No blackouts, energy execs assure public

By Abigail L. Ho and Gil C. Cabacungan

ENERGY OFFICIALS yesterday assured the public that there will be no massive blackouts or power interruptions in Luzon as a result of a Supreme Court ruling ordering the relocation of the key power transmission lines south of Metro Manila.

"We will ask for a reconsideration. Until the decision is final and executory, we should not fear any interruption," said Energy Secretary Raphael Lotilla.

Lotilla said the energy department has, on instructions from President Macapagal-Arroyo, begun preparing alternative and contingency plans.

The Supreme Court recently ordered the shutdown and relocation of the 230-kilovolt Sucat-Araneta-Balintawak transmission line, a key link to the electricity supply of Luzon.

The decision has triggered fears of massive power blackouts in Metro Manila and nearby provinces for at least a year.

National Transmission Corp. president and CEO Alan Ortiz earlier said it would take Transco about 12 to 18 months to put in place an alternative line to divert



LOTILLA

the power from the Sucat-Araneta-Balintawak line.

"The government is fully aware of the economic damage of power outages as we have had several power blackouts in the past. We are preparing all necessary measures to prevent massive blackouts should the SC decision become final and executory," Lotilla said.

The March 23 high court ruling upheld a Makati court decision in 2000 stopping the National Power Corp. from transmitting power through its transmission lines that run from Sucat in Parañaque to Araneta Ave. in Quezon City.

The lower court acted on a petition filed by residents of Dasmarinas Village in Makati which opposed the transmission line project, claiming that residents in the areas where the transmission lines pass through would be at risk from radiation.

But the DOE has cited a joint environmental study conducted by the Department of Health and Napocor in 2001 which showed that the actual electro-magnetic field radiation levels of the Sucat-Araneta-Balintawak line were not harmful to public health.

Tests showed that the electric and magnetic field readings were below the limits set by the DOH and the International Commission on Non-Ionizing Radiation Protection (ICNIRP), the DOE said.

In its March 23 decision, the Supreme Court also said there was not enough evidence that the power lines could be endangering the health and safety of residents in the areas where the lines pass.

Lotilla said the Napocor and Transco were now preparing to file a motion for reconsideration with the Supreme Court.

In the meantime, he said the DOE, Napocor and Transco were already reviewing their contingency plans and making preparations to tap alternatives in case the SC decision does become final and executory.

In an earlier interview, Ortiz said shutting down the line would cause power outages in half of Metro Manila, including vital installations like the Edsa Metro Rail Transit 3 (MRT-3) and the Ninoy Aquino International Airport.

The Makati Central Business District, the country's financial center, would also suffer power outages, he said.



A MILITANT member of the human rights group Karapatan points to Jaime Beltran Fuentes, star witness in the government's sedition case against six party-list congressmen, as the man identified as a military asset. Fuentes had claimed to be a security aide of a leftist personality. Inset shows Fuentes in his appearance before the Department of Justice.

Star witness exposed as military asset

By Blanche S. Rivera

WHEN OSCAR LAPIDA JR. SAW the military's main witness against party-list legislators accused of plotting to topple President Macapagal-Arroyo baring his face on television a week ago, he could not believe his eyes.

As it turned out, Jaime B. Fuentes, who claimed he was the chief security officer of a known Leftist leader, was the same man seen throwing his weight around at the Philippine Army's 74th Infantry Battalion headquarters in Catmon, Quezon a month ago, Lapida told the INQUIRER in a telephone interview.

Lapida, a media liaison officer of the Southern Tagalog chapter of Bagong Alyansang Makabayan, said he met Fuentes on Feb. 11 while he and other Bayan members and affiliates were traveling to Mulanay, Quezon on a fact-finding mission.

Their convoy of five jeeps was stopped by soldiers in front of the

Army detachment and barred from moving onward because they had no permit from the Mulanay mayor to investigate alleged human rights abuses in the area.

It was while the group was negotiating with the Army that Lapida and other leaders of the mission came face to face with Fuentes, who was mocking the people inside the jeeps.

"Don't you know me? Are you from Bayan? Are you still doing this for the people and the party?" Lapida quoted Fuentes as asking members of the mission as he went from jeep to jeep.

According to Lapida, Fuentes had introduced himself simply as "Omar," a nominee of the defeated party-list group Alliance for Nationalism and Democracy (Anad) during the 2004 elections.

Anad is known to have held rallies in support of Ms. Arroyo and caused a stir last year when some of its members figured in a brawl with organizers of the "citi-

zens' court trial" of the President. Fuentes was followed by armed soldiers as he bullied members of the mission, one of whom managed to secretly photograph the man, Lapida said.

Lapida said he saw Fuentes on television last March 23 during a live coverage of a hearing at the Department of Justice on rebellion charges filed against party-list Representatives Rafael Mariano, Crispin Beltran, Satur Ocampo, Teddy Casiño, Joel Virador and Liza Maza.

Fuentes, whom police had earlier presented in public wearing a hood, appeared at the March 23 hearing wearing a hat, dark shades and a towel that covered part of his face. State Prosecutor Emmanuel Velasco forced him to expose his face on pain of throwing out his affidavit against the legislators.

Lapida said that as soon as he recognized the face on TV, he immediately had the photos developed, showing that Fuentes and Omar were the same person.

Etta slams NPA on land mine use

THE DECISION OF COMMUNIST REBELS TO continue using land mines to attack military targets and vital government facilities could mean more violations of the rights of the civilian population, according to party-list Rep. Loretta Ann "Etta" Rosales.

It was a "drastic and desperate" decision, said the Akbayan party-list representative and member of the House committee on human rights.

The central committee of the Communist Party of the Philippines recently called on its armed wing, the New People's Army, to "inflict casualties on an advancing enemy force by using land mines, small teams and snipers."

Rosales said that if the CPP spokesperson Rogelio Rosal was quoted correctly as having made that statement, "he blatantly violates the human rights and international humanitarian law agreement the CPP signed with the Philippine government."

She said the Comprehensive Agreement on Respect for Human Rights and International Humanitarian Law which the communist rebels and the government signed during peace talks during the Estrada administration provided for the application of the principles of international humanitarian law "in order to protect the civilian population and ... persons who do not take direct part or who have ceased to take part in the armed hostilities."

Rosales noted that one of the treaties related to international humanitarian law was the Ottawa Treaty that banned the use of anti-

personnel mines.

She said the communist insurgents' claim that the NPA did not use "contact-detonated landmines" — or anti-personnel land mines — was belied by reports on the field.

She cited a report that a civilian was a casualty of a contact-detonated land mine planted by the NPA in Puerto Galera, Mindoro.

In Butuan City, three soldiers were killed, allegedly when one of them stepped on a land mine.

"Rosal's call to step up armed action against the military regardless of whether this is violative or not of human rights and international humanitarian law recalls a Palparan mindset," she said, referring to Army Gen. Jovito Palparan, who has been accused of summary execution of militants and their sympathizers.

"Both Rosal and Palparan apparently come from the same mold, a mold that believes that the only solution to the problems of Philippine society is the use of force, armed, violent and coercive, regardless of the harm they do to the life of the people and their right to dignity, security and self-fulfillment," she said.

She urged Congress to prioritize the enactment of House Bill 2675, or the Comprehensive Law on Landmines, which would be in compliance with the country's obligations under two related treaties — the Ottawa Treaty and the Convention on the Prohibition of the Use of Landmines ratified on Feb. 15, 2000 and the 1996 Amended Protocol on Prohibitions or Restrictions on the Use of Mines.

Michael Lim Ubac

4,000 tenants to receive Luisita land

THE DEPARTMENT OF AGRARIAN REFORM said yesterday it has identified about 4,000 farmers entitled to a piece of land when the Cojuangco-owned Hacienda Luisita is distributed to farm workers.

Agrarian Reform Undersecretary Narciso Nieto said the government was nearly finished with the identification of beneficiaries and would soon proceed with the survey of the 4,915-hectare sugar estate.

Nieto said it was possible that more than 3,000 hectares of the hacienda owned by the family of former President Corason Aquino would be subject to distribution after exclud-

ing land occupied by residences and roads. Nieto's statement came as Luisita workers sought a meeting with DAR provincial and regional officials to raise a concern on the area to be distributed to the workers.

Robert Pahilga, counsel for the Alyansa ng mga Magbubukid ng Asyenda Luisita (Ambala), said the DAR issued a notice of coverage for only 2,039.64 hectares.

The Ambala has asked the Presidential Agrarian Reform Council to subject to land reform the original 6,453 hectares owned by the Tarlac Development Corp. or Tadeo.

Blanche S. Rivera

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US Catholic Church set to donate P14M for Leyte

By Christian V. Esguerra

THE CATHOLIC CHURCH IN THE United States is poised to donate as much as \$280,000 (roughly P14.2 million) to families of victims of the massive landslide in Southern Leyte on Feb. 17.

The hefty donation will be coursed through the Catholic Relief Services (CRS), the official international humanitarian agency of the United States Conference of Catholic Bishops.

Quoting the agency, the Catholic Bishops Conference of the Philippines yesterday said more than a third of the projected amount had already been raised.

On top of the money, the agency will also bring its housing partner, Graham Saunders, to help build permanent houses for more than 300

families displaced by the landslide.

The CBCP said the CRS had been searching for permanent relocation sites so construction could begin in the next few weeks.

In the meantime, the agency was busy working with Caritas in providing basic essentials like rice, sleeping mats, canned goods, soap and milk for residents of Barangay Guinsaungon.

The CRS donation was a welcome relief to Guinsaungon folk who still rely on goodwill to survive each day at relocation centers.

Authorities are rushing to build permanent homes for them considering that relief good could only sustain some 300 families for so long. Many of the survivors relied on the rice field that was wiped out by mud and boulders.

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In IPV Case No. 10-2005-00001 entitled: "LING NA LAU, complainant vs. BENJAMIN YU, doing business under the name and style of MCA Manufacturing and HEIDI S. CUA, proprietor of South Ocean Chinese Drug Store, respondents", the Intellectual Property Office recently issued an Order approving a compromise agreement between the parties whereby: (1) respondents acknowledge the exclusive right of complainant Ling Na Lau to the trademark TOP GEL T.G. & DEVICE OF A LEAF for use on papaya whitening soap as the registered owner thereof; (2) respondents undertake to cease and desist from using the trademark TOP GEL T.G. & DEVICE OF A LEAF and not to manufacture, sell, distribute any papaya whitening soap using/bearing a mark/name identical or confusingly similar to, or constituting a colorable imitation of the trademark TOP GEL T.G. & DEVICE OF A LEAF and/or TOP GEL MCA & MCA DEVICE; (3) respondents undertake to pull-out within forty-five (45) days from March 21, 2006 all their products bearing a mark identical or confusingly similar to, or constituting a colorable imitation of the trademark TOP GEL T.G. & DEVICE OF A LEAF and/or TOP GEL MCA & MCA DEVICE; (4) respondents agree and undertake to pay FIVE HUNDRED (P500,000.00) PESOS for every breach or violation of any of the foregoing undertakings.

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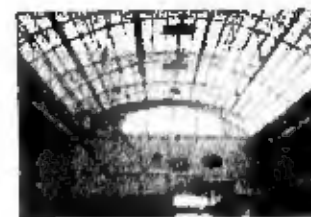
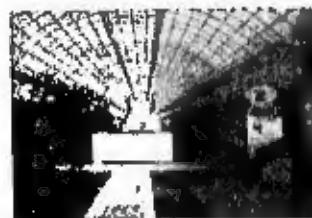
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THE MARCH 30 ISSUE, a front-page story on the NPA's plan to expand use of land mines vs military aid, was the first of the founding anniversary of the company. The NPA marked its 37th—no founding on Wednesday—not Thursday.

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Correction

IN LATER EDITIONS OF THE MARCH 30 ISSUE, a front-page story—"Red leaders urge NPA to expand use of land mines vs military"—misstated the date of the founding anniversary of the communist New People's Army. The NPA marked its 37th—not 32nd—anniversary of its founding on Wednesday—not Thursday.

Readers may send their requests for correction of factual errors in writing to the Day Desk, Philippine Daily Inquirer, PDI Building, China Road, Avenue corner Mascardo Street, Makati City, fax Nos. 897-47-93/94; e-mail address: daydesk@inquirer.com.ph.

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TOPNOTCHERS OF THE MARCH 2006 MEDICAL TECHNOLOGY LICENSURE EXAM

NO. 1



Aaron Jan Palmares

NO. 5

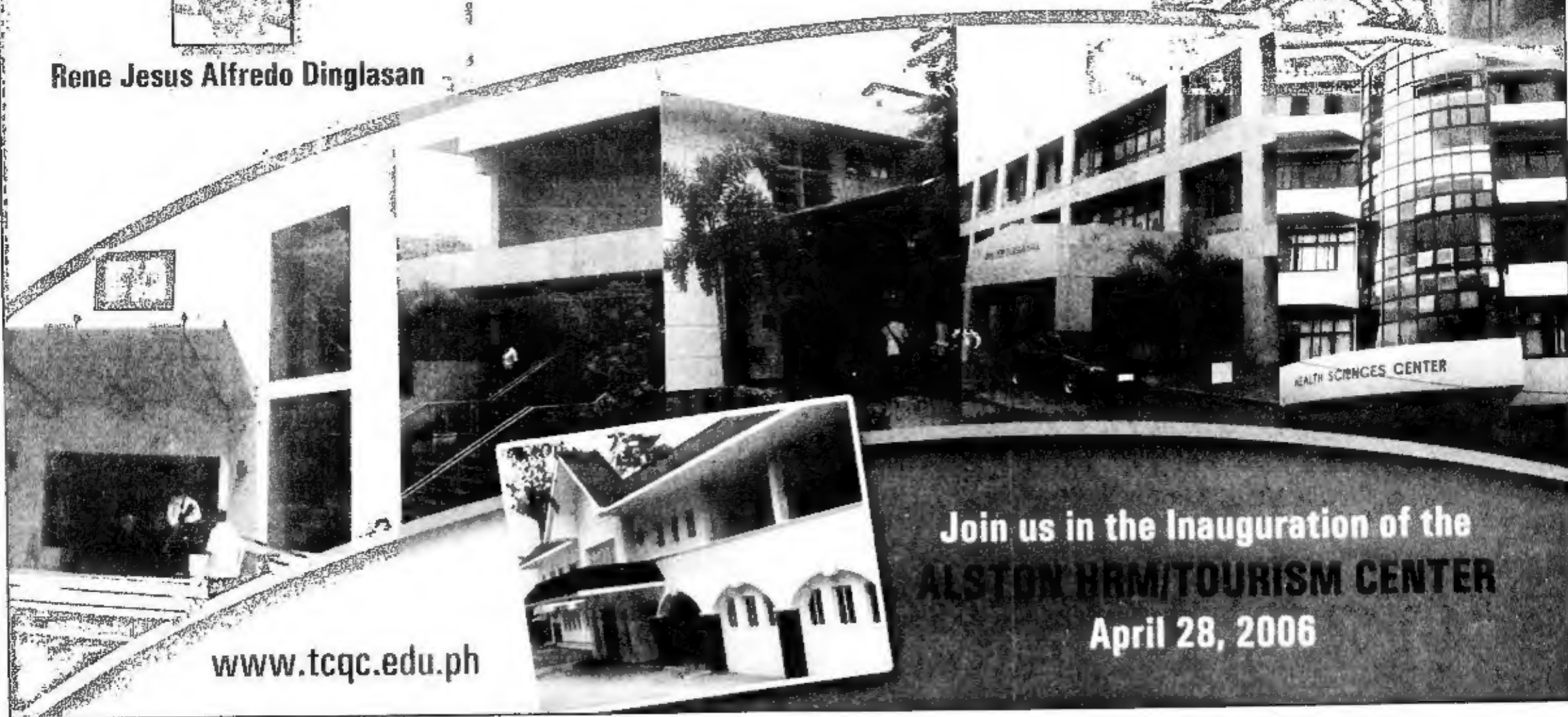


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Talks in final stage; GMA sees peace with Moro rebs this year

PEACE WITH MORO SEPARATIST rebels in Mindanao can be achieved this year, according to President Macapagal-Arroyo as she urged donors to increase aid to the strife-torn region.

"Before the year is out, we will be able to achieve a lasting peace in

Mindanao with your support," the President said at a meeting with the country's foreign aid donors.

"Yet the last mile is always the hardest sailing... the winds of resistance will blow most fiercely," she said as she called on the donor countries to speed up the

release of aid money to the south "to help us through this last mile more smoothly."

She said that "nothing will be more powerful for the future development of the Philippines than to bring peace, stability and justice" to the resource-rich south-

ern island of Mindanao, the home of the country's Muslim minority.

The main Muslim separatist group, the Moro Islamic Liberation Front, said earlier this month it expects "rough sailing" in the final stage of the talks.

The government and the MILF

announced in Kuala Lumpur last month that they had reached a preliminary deal on the controversial issue of ancestral lands—communal farms that came under state control when the Philippines became a Spanish colony in the 17th century.

Negotiations between the government and the 12,000-member MILF are due to resume soon after being postponed due to a foiled coup plot against Ms Arroyo in February. The two sides have agreed a ceasefire but sporadic clashes still take place. AFP

Gov't bullish on sale of 2 TV stations

By Alcuin Papa

THE PRESIDENTIAL COMMISSION ON GOOD Government is confident it can sell the RPN-9 and IBC-13 television networks amid claims that the state-controlled TV stations have liabilities that far outweigh their assets, thus making them unattractive to buyers.

"That's not true. Those are just speculations. The perception is that the liabilities might exceed the assets. But there's nothing sure," said PCGG Commissioner Ricardo Abcede.

Abcede said it would be best to wait for the results of an audit being conducted by CLSA Exchange Capital, the firm that won the bid to be RPN-9's financial adviser.

A financial adviser for IBC-13 has yet to be designated by the PCGG.

"The financial adviser is looking into that and we can't make a definitive statement until their study is over. We should be more careful when we make statements like these on the question of the liabilities and assets of the two stations. Let's wait for what financial adviser will say," Abcede said.

He said the government, which sequestered the two networks after the first Edsa people power revolution in 1986, was determined to dispose of the properties because of losses.

"The government is losing in these two entities. What's the point in continuing [operations]? We still want to dispose of the two stations. But let's wait for what CLSA will say," said Abcede.

The PCGG commission said he was also against the idea of government being in the media industry.

"It's OK to have one station. Like in the UK, the BBC is earning because it is the only government station there," he said.

Recently, Jose AR Bengzon III, chief privatization officer of the Privatization and Management Office, and Felipe Gozon, president of GMA-7, released statements saying that it might be difficult to sell the two stations because of their tax liabilities. The PMO is an attached agency of the finance department.

Abcede earlier announced that the PCGG was targeting a sale of the two stations this year. RPN-9 has a tag price of P1.3 billion and IBC-13, P2 billion.

The two networks have been on the chopping block since being taken over in 1986 from Marcos crony Roberto Benedicto who surrendered them to the government in 1990 through a compromise agreement.

Bird flu-free RP to resume poultry exports to Japan

THE PHILIPPINES, WHICH HAS REMAINED free of the bird flu virus, aims to resume poultry exports to Japan and to ship to new markets in Asia, Africa and Europe, a senior industry official said yesterday.

Ruben Pascual, chair of the Poultry Export Board, said firms had submitted documents to Japan to prove local poultry remained free of the deadly strain of the avian influenza virus called H5N1.

"We are confident the Japanese government will soon allow the resumption of exports," Pascual told Reuters.

The H5N1 avian influenza strain has killed at least 98 people around the world, mainly in Asia and the Middle East, since 2003, according to figures from the World Health Organization.

The Philippines voluntarily stopped exports of poultry to Japan in July after three ducks at an isolated farm were infected with a weaker strain of bird flu.

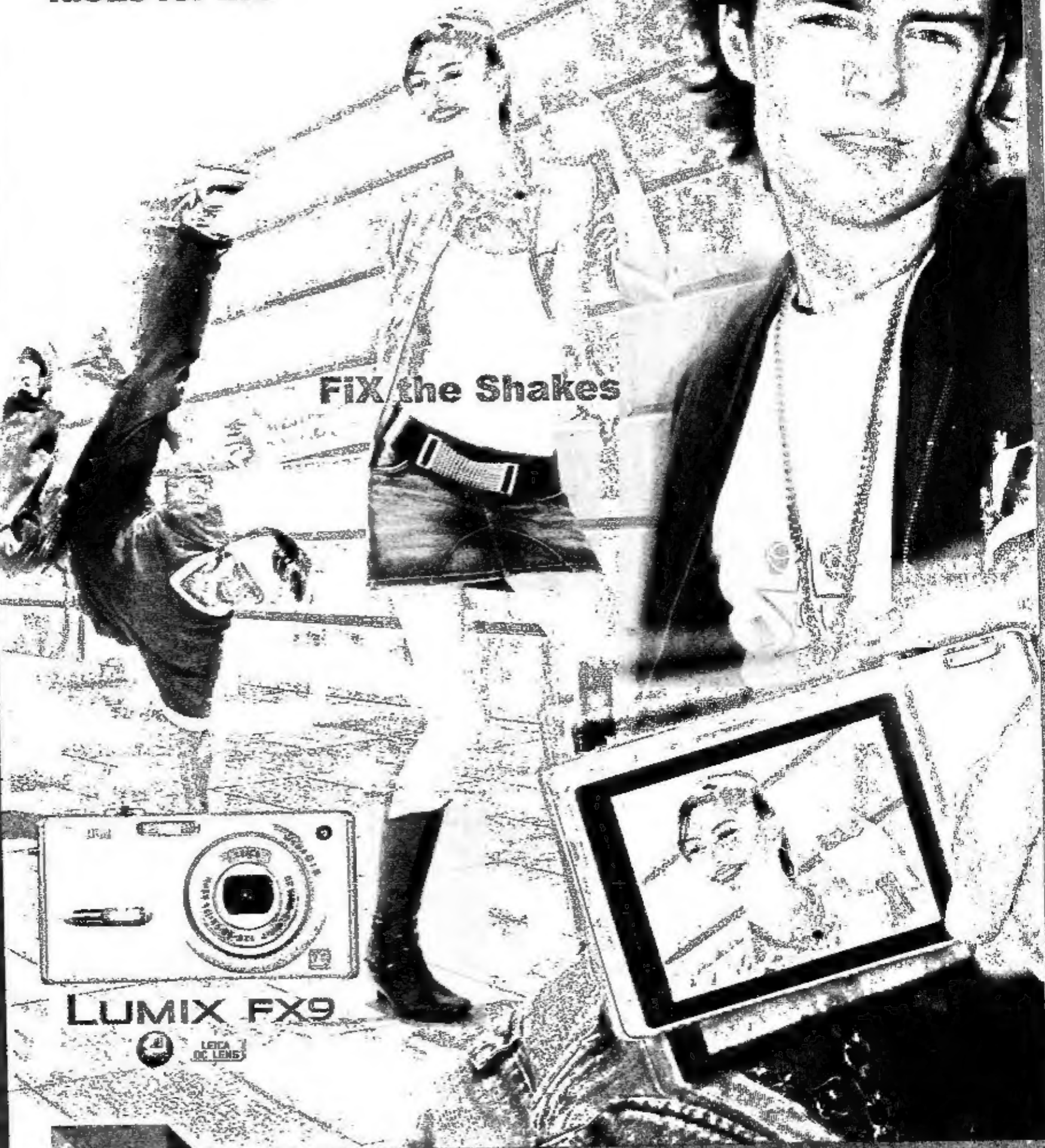
Tests conducted by the Australian Animal Health Laboratory on samples found at the farm found no active infection of H5N1.

Japan, one of Asia's biggest buyers, started buying directly from the Philippines in 2004 after outbreaks of bird flu in major poultry exporting countries.

Pascual said the country exported 5,000-6,000 tons of poultry to Japan from 2004 till July 8 last year when the Philippines halted shipments.

Reuters

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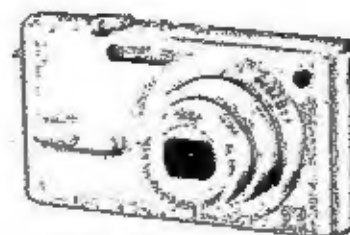
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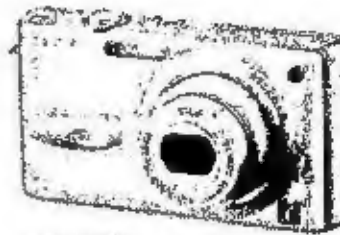
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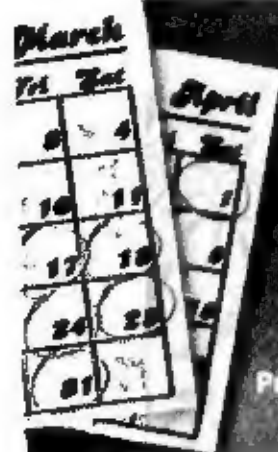
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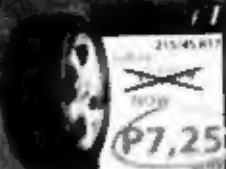


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2 lawmakers hit Favila for calling jobless Pinoys choosy

From page A1

while doctors worked as nurses and caregivers abroad belied Favila's observation. "I suggest that Secretary Favila talk to experts who have updated facts and data," the Cibac lawmaker said.

Favila said the unemployment problem was more of a lack of a desire to work rather than the absence of jobs.

"We have plenty of jobs available in the country today, but the problem is some Filipinos are just *pinikan* or choosy," Favila had said.

He made the statement after a research group said that the government was facing a jobs deficit of crisis proportions.

The Labor Education and Research Network said on Tuesday that if the number of unemployed (2.8 million), underemployed (6.9 million) and those not looking for work (1.1 million) were combined, there would be 10.8 million out of the 36 million workforce needing jobs.

Rene Ofreneo, director of the School of Labor and Industrial Relations at the University of the Philippines, said the National Statistics



VILLANUEVA: Insult to OFWs



FAVILA: Choosy job-seekers



CASINO: Come down from ivory tower

Office's Labor Force Survey in January found that employment in the formal sector was shrinking while employment in the informal sector of the labor market was growing.

Ivory tower

"What kind of analysis is that?" said Casino of Favila's statement.

Casino said "the stark reality is that Filipino

workers don't have the luxury of being choosy."

He urged Favila to come down from "his ivory tower" once in a while to talk to ordinary workers, the majority of whom didn't even earn the minimum wage.

Casino said that even if reports were true that a million jobs were available in call centers, aviation, mining and agribusiness, "what is that compared to the 2.8 million Filipinos without work and 7 million more looking for additional jobs?"

He said the bottom line was that there was not enough work to go around.

"Favila is misinformed if he believes that business process outsourcing seats are unfilled because Filipinos don't want to work the night shift. In fact, applicants are scrambling even for the night shift due to the night differential pay, but many fail to qualify," the Bayan Muna lawmaker said.

Labor Secretary Patricia A. Sto. Tomas joined Favila in belying claims by labor research groups that there was a looming job crisis.

Sto. Tomas said many quality jobs in a number of sectors were available but these remained vacant because of a jobs-skills mismatch.

9 employment generators

Citing the findings of last month's National Manpower Summit, Sto. Tomas said nine sectors were projected to generate more than 4 million new jobs from 2006 to 2010, of which more than 1.2 million were expected to be generated in 2006-2007.

For 2006 alone, the top three job generating sectors are agribusiness with a projected 329,609 openings, followed by cyber services with 148,350, and hotels and restaurants with 56,001.

Sto. Tomas, however, said that "while there are quality jobs available in these sectors, the problem lies in mismatch, or the challenge of filling

Still jobless? Go to Camp Crame

By Luige A. del Puerto

ARE YOU A COLLEGE GRADUATE in need of a job who would be satisfied with a gross salary of about P12,000 a month?

Try the Philippine National Police. Officials yesterday said the PNP would be recruiting 3,000 cops this year, following assurances by Malacañang that there was enough money to hire more people.

Applicants must be college graduates, 5'4" tall for males and 5'2" for females, and not more than 29 years old.

The requirements include transcript of records and clearances from the police and the National Bureau of Investigation.

Applicants will take an eligibility exam conducted by the National Police Commission. If successful, they will undergo a one-year training program.

PIB for loyalty

At the PNP anniversary celebration in January, Ms Arroyo announced that she was setting aside P1 billion in additional funds for PNP personnel for their loyalty to her administration.

Part of the money will be used to hire more cops in the next few years, according to Ms Arroyo.

PNP Director General Arturo

them with qualified manpower possessing the required skills and competencies."

In the call centers, for instance, the employer or recruiter has to interview about 100 applicants and only four or five of them would be hired while the rest would be rejected because of lack of qualifications—mainly English communication skills.

Iraq

Creative services, medical tourism, health services, mining and aviation industries, and overseas employment are the other employment generators, according to the labor department.

Militant labor groups were not

Lomibao has approved the recruitment of 3,000 men and women and instructed the Directorate for Personnel and Records Management to begin processing applications for Police Officer 1.

The new cops will simply fill up the 2,900 positions that were left vacant last year and will become vacant within the first semester of this year, said the PNP spokesperson Senior Supt. Samuel Pagdilao Jr.

Slots for women

Of the job openings, 15 percent or about 450 slots are reserved for women, who comprise nearly 9 percent of the police force, Pagdilao said.

Each regional police office is assigned a quota, based on the police to population ratio of the area, while national support units such as the Intelligence Group, Criminal Investigation Group and Maritime Group are allocated 200 recruits each.

The Metro Manila Police has been allotted 150 recruits. The number is on top of the 250 recruits the police in the capital hired last year.

The 3,000 police personnel to be hired will boost the PNP's total force to 114,881, or one policeman for every 715 people.

The PNP said the P1 billion in additional funds would allow it to buy 5,000 handguns and 500 patrol vehicles.

amused by Favila's observation.

"If Filipinos are choosy, why do they still sneak into Iraq despite the violence there. Also, all the work that foreigners dislike, such as care-giving, are being taken by Filipinos," said Elmer Labog, national chair of the Kilusang Mayo Uno.

"The workers are looking for work where they can have decent salaries and good working conditions, which the government has the obligation to ensure," he said. (See related story on Page A29.)

Labog said that despite the government's boast that it was able to create 750,000 new jobs as of January, most of these jobs were contractual, part-time or menial.

Slain cop wrote open letter chiding Pasig colleagues

From page A1

ternal Affairs Service in the letter released to the *Inquirer* yesterday.

"The once famous police force seemed to have vanished in the air," Marasigan said, blaming rogue cops in his lament.

'Their success our future'

"Let us guard one another and report our comrades joining evil forces for a fee. Their success is our failure, for there is no way that criminal syndicate will flourish without enjoying the protection of some scoundrels in uniform."

The letter was prompted by the discovery of the so-called "shabu tiangge" near the Pasig City capital last month. It was bulldozed several days later by Pasig City Mayor Vicente Eusebio in what City Hall critics said was an attempt to destroy evidence.

On Wednesday morning, four men in maroon shirts casually walked up to the bullet-proof Pajero that Marasigan was driving as it slowed down at a street corner and opened fire at the police officer, a former president and founding member of the Pasig police brotherhood. He sustained 12 bullet wounds, including six in the head and face.

At least three police units are now tracking down the gunmen. Apart from the inquiry by the Eastern Police District, the Criminal Investigation and Detection Group and the Internal Affairs Service, Marasigan's own unit, are doing parallel investigations, said IAS Inspector General Alexis Canonizado.

Since Wednesday, all the men from Marasigan's unit have been in the field, gathering evidence. On its closed office door were the words "on mission."

Theories advanced

Several theories have been advanced for the murder, including Marasigan's involvement in the investigation of some of the widely publicized incidents in the Pasig police blotter.

Yesterday, the IAS chief revealed that he had submitted to PNP Director General Arturo Lomibao the findings of the panel that investigated the killing of three suspected car robbers by officers of the Traffic Management Group last Nov. 7 at the Ortigas Center.

Although he refused to discuss IAS's recommendations, Canonizado disclosed that the probe body, which had Marasigan as its spokesperson, had found varying degrees of administrative and criminal liabilities at

legedly on the part of the TMG officers involved in the operation.

"I have submitted the recommendations of the panel to the chief. I did not change anything. I submitted [them] as is," Canonizado said.

The NPA angle

Another ranking IAS official told the *Inquirer* it was unlikely that the New People's Army had a hand in the killing of Marasigan. "The NPA angle ... is a bit far-fetched," said the officer. "He has property in Quezon province, and (the NPA) did not touch him there."

PO3 Rogelio Baltazar, case investigator from the Pasig Police Station, said that Marasigan's many dealings as a law enforcer and businessman were part of a broad investigation.

"The killers were angry at him, but we don't know yet what angered them ... There has yet to emerge a single angle and we are looking at all possibilities, and then we will eliminate what are less likely to be the cause," said Baltazar.

Marasigan, who spent some 30 years in the service, had not driven far from his house on Wednesday when the assassins struck, spraying bullets at his vehicle and then fleeing on foot.

Sketches of suspects

With additional descriptions of witnesses, police added another artist's sketch to the two released hours after the shooting. Roughly as tall and as young as the two suspects described earlier, Baltazar said the third suspect may also be between 20 and 30 years old, between 5'4" and 5'5" in height, his long hair in a ponytail.

Chief Supt. Charlemagne Alejandrino, the EPD director, also said investigators would compare slugs retrieved from the Wednesday shooting with those found after the killing of businessman Leonardo Umale at the Ortigas Center on March 17.

"We are cross-matching the slugs recovered from the crime scenes to determine if the cartridges in both incidents match. That's standard operating procedure, because you would see that both were planned, both may have involved hired assassins," said the district chief.

Marasigan's wife earlier told reporters that she was considering many possibilities, but could not formulate a theory yet.

She said her husband received death threats recently and had been tailed by suspicious-looking men in a car.

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Joelynn Marie H.; SANTOS, Jones Emanuel S.; SANTOS, Leigh Vhon G.; SANTOS, Ma. Rhea M.; SANTOS, Van Brian S.; SANTOS, JR., Gloria D.; SAQUING, Aileen N.; SARIL, Andre Norman G.; SARIP, Bassett M.; SAWADJAN, JR., Abdussabir B.; SEARES, Lynn V.; SEGARRA, Garry S.; SELDA, Enrique C.; SERASPI, Butch B.; SERAZON, Maureen Zera O.; SERRANO, Abigail Hope T.; SERRANO, Randy G.; SERRANO, Ronald S.; SESE, Abigail D.; SENIERS, Leo L.; SHAKRAMY, Sherwin E.; SIAO, Dominic W.; SIBUGAN, Rachel Anne T.; SIBULO, Julia Ann O.; SIERRA, Charles R.; SIMBAHAN, Rowena M.; SINDAYEN, Lilybeth T.; SINDO, Ronald Allan B.; SIPIN, Edward S.; SITCHON, Ma. Patricia R.; SOLANGON, JR., Eduardo C.; SOLANOY, Jeovart Lesmes S.; SOLENG, JR., Eduardo V.; SOLIBAGA, JR., Adelito M.; SOLONIO, JR., Augusto T.; SORBITO, IV, Silverio E.; SORIA, Ethel D.; SORIANO, Andrew R.; SORITA, Christian H.; SOTTO, JR., Ernesto R.; SU, Anna Liza L.; SUALOG, Cyrus Victor T.; SUAN, Daylinda R.; SUAN, Maria Laureen D.; SUAREZ, Kristine Grace L.; SUAREZ, Melvin C.; SUGALAN-MONTALLANA, Maria Corazon O.; SULIT, Nhea Victoria M.; SUMANTING, Roxanne L.; SUMBI, Leonides B.; SUNIO, Michael T.; SUSON, Ed Antonio G.; SUSUSCO, Raymiejella R.; SY, Anna Katrina S.; SY, Frederick Howard L.; SY-DEL-PRADO, Joanne P.; SYTAT, Mary Jane W.; SYTU, Herbert Alvin K.

T

TABDI, Elnora A.; TABION, Gabriel S.; TABLANTE, Tristan Jason Q.; TABUZO, Nicole A.; TABOTABO, Learson Q.; TACORDA, Karen T.; TAER, Rodulfo Enrique C.; TAEZA, Marife S.; TAGAO, Shirley M.; TAGUINES, Azee A.; TAGUINOD, Jodalline L.; TAGUPA, May Hazel M.; TAJONERA, Ian C.; TALABONG, Donabella C.; TALALALA, Bingle B.; TAM, Maria Rosario S.; TAMAYO, Donni C.; TAMOLANG, JR., Teofilo Gala V.

TAN, Christopher Ryan T.; TAN, Joel A.; TAN, Kerwin K.; TAN, Luis Cayetano S.; TAN, Lynart Walford A.; TAN, Maria Pilar Concepcion G.; TAN, Oscar Franklin B.; TANDOG, Sylvia Blanche F.; TANKILUT, Sheryl May B.; TAPIA, Josephina Nancia L.; TARKO, Mari-anna A.; TATEL, May T.; TAULI, Marlon K.; TAWAGON, Sidie Ma-rona Aziza G. L.; TAYAG, Annalyn C.; TAYAG, Carlos Martin M.; TAYAG, Norman Gerardo O.; TAYKO, Jo Anne O.; TAYO, Siegfried S.; TE, Doris S.; TEANO, Jordan J.; TEJADA, Clara V.; TEJANO, Ma. Janice R.; TELAN, Mario Pocholo M.; TEMONES, Allan P.; TEMPROSA, Erwin A.; TENA, Ferdinand M.; TENEBRO, Tristram C.; TENEDERO, Ruben M.; TENG, Jason C.; TENG, Jayne Marie C.; TESORO, Mhelysena D.; TESTON, Paolo S.; TIBON, Ma. Michelle P.; TICCOY, Ronelito O.; TIEMPO, Anecto E.; TIMAJO, Dennis M.; TINIO, Roselyn M.; TIONGSON, Donna Mae B.; TIROL, Armand D.; TIU, Angelita T.; TIU, Jennifer A.; TOBES, Tristan C.; TOBIAS, Barry Neil N.; TOL, Mary Angelina S.; TOLEDANES, Diosa C.; TOLENTINO, Evelia M.; TOLENTINO, Melgabir M.; TOMAS, JR., Reynaldo P.; TOMBOC, Mariv P.; TOMELDEN, Victoria T.; TOMINES, John Rey A.; TORIBIO, Carou Mae W.; TORRECAMPO, Rey C.; TORRECARION, Joy Randolph N.; TORRES, Aida M.; TORRES, Maricar D.; TORRES, JR., Rogelio D.; TRAYVILLA, Ruby Ann P.; TRESVALLES, Anthony Noel C.; TUALLA, Nyerson Dexter Tio Q.; TUANQUIN, Omar Ian R.; TULIAD, Francis H.; TUMALAD, Alwin M.; TUMAMAK, Maricris S.; TURA, Alex D.; TURLA, Aileen O.; TY, Ricky G.

U, V, W

ULIC, Michael P.; ULTADO, JR., Roberto B.; UNICO, Ma. Perpetua B.; UNIRA-OREJAS, Juanita A.; URREA, Roderick I.; URSUA, JR., Antonio M.; UTULO, Edelmar M.; UY, Allan Q.; UY, Ian Joseph Z.; UY, Janet S.; UY, Maria Angeli P.; UY, Randolph S.; UY-MARPURI, Ma. Milagros G.; VALDEZ, Phoebe S.; VALDEZ, Vanessa P.; VALENCIA, Karen Joy H.; VALENCIANO, Rhodex P.; VALENTON, Cinderella Y.; VALERO, Angel Chona Grace I.; VALEROSO-GOMEZ, Ruby B.; VALONES, Irene D.; VARGAS, Jorge E.; VASQUEZ, Chevin Q.; VASQUEZ, Dorothy D.; VEGA, Rande R.; VELARDE, Melissa Angela G.; VELASCO, Jan Kendrick Z.; VELICARIA, Genevieve E.; VENTAYEN, George F.; VENTURA, III, Geronimo L.; VENTURANZA, II, Cayo F.; VERA CRUZ, John Christopher P.; VERA, JR., Emmanuel Anthony L.; VERGARA, Maria Delia T.; VERSOZA, Rosemarie O.; VICE-DO, Veronica V.; VIDAL, Giovanni E.; VILLA, Charle Lyn M.; VILLA, Edwin R.; VILLALBA, Benedict Byron C.; VILLALON, Joel L.; VILLANUEVA, Christiane Adoraine T.; VILLANUEVA, Jayrous L.; VILLANUEVA, Marcus Aurelius C.; VILLANUEVA, Marlon P.; VILLANUEVA, Noel M.; VILLANUEVA, Noime A.; VILLANUEVA, Quennie Marie C.; VILLARIN, Dave L.; VILLARUBIA, Leah P.; VILLARUEL, Dax B.; VILLARUEL, III, Hardee B.; VILLASIS, Anthony E.; VILLASOR, John Paolo Roberto Lino A.; VILLEGAS, Avelina J.; VILLEGAS, Hazel F.; VILLONES, Renato I.; VITUG, Jessica R.; VIUDEZ, Emerson M.; VIVAR, Arnel O.; VIVERO, JR., Inocencio R.; VIZCO-ADRIANO, Marlen S.; VINAS, Robinson C.; WAHAB, Leah C.; WANDAG, Kristian B.

Y, Z

YAMSUAN, Glennaries M.; YAKASIN, JR., Henry L.; YAP, Marlon I.; YAP, II, Sergio E.; YAP-ANGELISTA, Jane T.; YEBES, Joy C.; YEE, Glenda J.; YODONG, Ada Gail A.; YODONG, Perry Ross T.; YUMOL, Dolores L.; ZAMORA, Nerissa Rhona V.; ZERRUDO, Clarence G.; ZIGA-GARCIA, Diane Valerie V.

PHILIPPINE HEALTH INSURANCE CORPORATION
CITYSTATE CENTRE, 709 Shaw Boulevard, Pasig City
Headline: 637-9999 www.philhealth.gov.ph

INVITATION TO APPLY FOR ELIGIBILITY AND TO BID
No. 2006-010-g

BIDDING FOR THE PROCUREMENT OF PHILHEALTH OFFICIAL RECEIPT
(SPECIALIZED OFFICIAL RECEIPT IN CONTINUOUS FORM)

The Philippine Health Insurance Corporation (PhilHealth), through the Corporate Operating Budget (COB) 2006 intends to apply the sum of P=8,400,000.00 being the approved Budget for the Contract (ABC) to payments under the contract for the Procurement of PhilHealth Official Receipt (Specialized Official Receipt in Continuous Form). Bids received in excess of the ABC shall be automatically rejected at Bid opening.

PhilHealth now invites Bids from eligible Bidders for the said procurement with the following specifications:

JOB TITLE : Printing of 4,000,000 sets of PhilHealth Official Receipt (Specialized Receipt in Continuous Form)

QUANTITY : 4,000,000 sets / 1,000 boxes

VERTICAL LENGTH : 5 inch

HORIZONTAL LENGTH : 8 inch

MATERIAL : Colored Carbon-less Paper/Impression must be clear up to the last ply

1st Ply - White Carbon-less paper (Fryor's Copy)

2nd ply - Green Carbon-less paper (Finance Office's Copy)

3rd Ply - Pink Carbon-less paper (Cashier's Copy)

One color print for text (Black)

PROCESS : Typeset/Offset

Serial numbers : Pre-numbered (8 digits)

All numeric (Crash Numbering)

4,000,000 sets (10500001 - 14500000)

Packaging : Serial Numbers must be posted on two (2) opposite sides of the box

1,000 sets/box

Others : PhilHealth logo printed in UV Ink at the center

Micro print "PhilHealth" on top of the word (Amount in words)

Delivery :

Schedule of Delivery	Boxes	Serial Nos. (From - To)	Delivery Date
1st	2,000,000	10500001 - 12500000	15 days after notice to proceed
2nd	2,000,000	12500001 - 14500000	15 days after the first delivery

Bidding will be conducted through open competitive bidding procedures using non-discretionary sealed criteria as specified in the Implementing Rules and Regulations Part A (IRR-A) of Republic Act 9184, otherwise known as the "Government Procurement Reform Act," and is restricted to Filipino Citizens/Sole Proprietorships, organizations with at least sixty percent (60%) interest or outstanding capital stock belonging to citizens of the Philippines, and to citizens or organizations of a country the laws or regulations of which grant similar rights or privileges to Filipino Citizens, pursuant to Republic Act 5183 and subject to Commonwealth Act 138. Only Bids from Bidders who pass the eligibility check will be opened. The bidder with the Lowest Calculated Bid (LCB) shall advance to the post-qualification stage in order to finally determine responsiveness of the bid to technical and financial requirements of the project. The contract shall then be awarded to the Lowest Calculated and Responsive Bidder (LCRB) who was determined as such after the post-qualification procedure.

Interested Bidders may obtain further information from the Office of the Secretary for the Bids and Awards Committees (OSBAC) in the Central Office of PhilHealth, Room 1107 11th floor Citystate Centre, 709 Shaw Blvd., Pasig City, and inspect the Bidding Documents from 8:30 a.m. to 4:30 p.m.

A complete set of Bidding Documents should be purchased by Interested Bidders from April 3 - 17, 2006 at the address below and upon payment of a non-refundable fee in the amount of P=4,000.00 cash. The prospective Bidder or his authorized representative shall receive the Bidding Documents personally.

PhilHealth will hold a Pre-Bid Conference open to all interested parties on April 18, 2006 at 10:30 a.m. at the OSBAC Conference Room (Rm. 1108), PhilHealth Central Office, 11th floor Citystate Centre, 709 Shaw Blvd., Pasig City.

Bids and eligibility requirements must be delivered to the OSBAC Conference Room on or before May 2, 2006, 10:30 a.m. The official time shall be based on the wall clock located at the OSBAC Conference Room. Late Bids shall not be accepted.

Bid opening shall be on May 2, 2006, 10:30 a.m. at the OSBAC Conference Room. Bids will be opened in the presence of the Bidders' representatives who choose to attend.

CY 2004 to CY 2005 is the relevant period for contracts which will be required to be submitted by PhilHealth.

PhilHealth reserves the right to accept or reject any Bid, to annul the bidding process, and to reject all Bids at any time prior to contract award, without thereby incurring any liability to the affected Bidder or Bidders.

Office of the Secretary for the Bids and Awards Committees in the Central Office
MR. JOSEPH O. VERGARA
Rm. 1107, 11th Floor Citystate Centre
709 Shaw Blvd., Pasig City, Metro Manila 1600
Tel. (02) 637-9999 local 1128, 1130 and 1830
e-mail add: osbac@philhealth.gov.ph
Facsimile No. 637-4735
www.philhealth.gov.ph

(Sgd.) Atty. VALENTIN C. GUANO
Chairperson, Bids and Awards Committee for Goods and Services
(PDI - March 31 & April 7, 2006)

PHILIPPINE PORTS AUTHORITY
PORT DISTRICT OFFICE OF VISAYAS
CIP COMPLEX, SERGIO OSMEÑA BLVD., NORTH RECLAMATION AREA, CEBU CITY, PHILIPPINES
TEL. NO. (032) 232-3401 TO 04 FAX NO. (032) 232-1990
e-mail: portvisayas@ppa.gov.ph website: www.ppa.gov.ph

INVITATION TO APPLY FOR ELIGIBILITY AND TO BID

The PHILIPPINE PORTS AUTHORITY, Port District Office - Visayas, through its Bids and Awards Committee - Engineering Project (BAC-EP), invites contractors registered with and classified by the Philippine Contractors Accreditation Board (PCAB) to apply for eligibility and to bid for the following project:

As:

Name of Contract : Improvement of Bocote Port
Location : Bocote, Negros Occidental
Major items of Work : 1) Rehabilitation (2,240.0 sq.m.)
2) Concrete Pavement (2,240.0 sq.m.)
3) Construction of Open Shed (10.0 m x 20.0 m)

Approved Budget for the Contract (ABC) : P=14,800,000.00
Source of Funds : PPA Corporate Fund
Contract Duration : One Hundred Forty Five (145) Calendar Days
PCAB Registration : Medium A "Port & Offshore Engineering"

Required Equipments:

No.	Unit	Item	Owned/Leased
1)	1 unit	Bar Bender	Owned
2)	1 unit	Bar Cutter	Owned
3)	2 units	One Bagger Concrete Mixer	Owned
4)	2 units	Concrete Vibrator	Owned
5)	1 unit	Electric Drill (500W)	Owned
6)	2 units	Dump Truck (10T)	Owned/Leased
7)	1 unit	Backhoe (0.60 cu.m.)	Owned/Leased
8)	1 unit	Drop Hammer (2T)	Owned/Leased
9)	1 unit	Roller Compactor (Vibratory-10T)	Owned/Leased
10)	1 unit	Truck-mounted Crane (35T)	Owned/Leased
11)	1 unit	Offset Hammer (3.5T)	Owned/Leased

B:

Name of Contract : Proposed Port Development Project
Location : Visayan, Delphin Island, Northern Samar
Major items of Work : 1) Const. of Causeway (8.0m x 66.0m)
2) Const. of RC Pier (9.0m x 66.0m)
P=26,012,941.67

Approved Budget for the Contract (ABC) : P=26,012,941.67
Source of Funds : PPA Corporate Fund
Contract Duration : Two Hundred Fifty (250) Calendar Days
PCAB Registration : Medium A "Port & Offshore Engineering"

Required Equipments:

No.	Unit	Item	Owned/Leased
1)	1 unit	Bar Bender	Owned
2)	1 unit	Bar Cutter	Owned
3)	2 units	One Bagger Concrete Mixer	Owned
4)	2 units	Concrete Vibrator	Owned
5)	1 unit	Welding Machine (150A)	Owned
6)	1 unit	Backhoe (0.60 cu.m.)	Owned/Leased
7)	1 unit	Boom Truck (5T)	Owned/Leased
8)	1 unit	Plate Compactor	Owned/Leased
9)	1 unit	Crane Barge (450 DWT)	Owned/Leased
10)	1 unit	Truck-mounted Crane (35T)	Owned/Leased
11)	1 unit	Diesel Hammer (3.5T)	Owned/Leased
12)	1 unit	Drop Hammer (2T)	Owned/Leased
13)	1 unit	Jackhammer w/ Compressor (350 CFM)	Owned/Leased
14)	1 unit	Road Grader/Dozer (125 HP)	Owned/Leased
15)	1 unit	Road Roller (10T)	Owned/Leased
16)	1 unit	Rock Grapple (2T)	Owned/Leased

Prospective bidders should possess a valid PCAB license and registration particulars applicable to the type and cost of the contract in the bid, have key personnel and equipment available for the prosecution of the contract, must have completed 95% for Major Items of Work (indicated above) on contract/projects with similar in nature and complexity to the contract to be bid within the past five (5) years immediately preceding the publication of this invitation; with a value of at least 50% of the ABC, and must also have the other eligibility requirements stated in the Eligibility Statement. Applications for eligibility, as well as the preliminary examination of bids, will be evaluated on "pass/fail" criteria. The BAC will conduct post-qualification of the lowest calculated bid, in accordance with the IRR-A of RA 9184, a contract will be awarded only to the lowest calculated and responsive bidder.

All particulars relative to Eligibility Statement and Screening, Bid Security, Performance Security, Pre-Bidding Conference, Evaluation of Bids, Post-Qualification and Award of Contract shall be governed by the pertinent provisions of RA 9184 and its Implementing Rules and Regulations (IRR).

The submission of Bids shall be in the following:

No.	Item	Submission
1.	Receipt from prospective bidders of Letters of Intent/Discontinuation of Application for Eligibility	April 08 - 17, 2006
2.	Submission of Bidding Documents	April 08 - 24, 2006
3.	Receipt of Eligibility Requirements	May 1, 2006

The BAC will issue to prospective bidders Eligibility Forms at Philippine Ports Authority, Port District Office - Visayas, CIP Complex, Sergio Osmeña Blvd., North Reclamation Area, Cebu City upon their submission of a L.O.I. photocopy of PCAB License and upon their payment of a non-refundable amount of P=1,000.00 (inclusive of VAT) to the Philippine Ports Authority, Port District Office - Visayas Cashier. Prospective bidders shall submit the Eligibility Requirements to the BAC at the said address. They may also obtain the results of the Eligibility Check by the BAC at the same address.

The BAC will issue Bidding Documents only to bidders declared by the BAC to be eligible for the bidding upon payment of a non-refundable amount of P=500.00 (inclusive of VAT) to the Philippine Ports Authority, Port District Office - Visayas Cashier.

The Philippine Ports Authority, Port District Office - Visayas reserves the right to accept or reject any bid, to annul the bidding process, and to reject all bids at any time prior to the award of contract without thereby incurring any liability to the affected bidder or bidders.

Approved by:
(Sgd.) JAMES J. GANTALAO
BAC Chairman

(PDI - March 24 & 31, 2006)

PNOC ENERGY DEVELOPMENT CORPORATION
Merritt Road, Fort Bonifacio, 1200 Taguig City, Philippines
P.O. Box 2162 MCPO. Tel. Nos. 893-8001 to 47/893-1320 Fax No. 640-1576

INVITATION TO APPLY FOR ELIGIBILITY AND TO BID

PNOC-Energy Development Corporation (PNOC-EDC) invites interested contractors to apply for eligibility and to bid for the project:

REPAINTING OF BUILDING FIVE EXTERIORS
EDC Bldg.

The Approved Budget is P=1,525,000.00 chargeable against PNOC-EDC fund. The contract duration is 45 calendar days.

Application forms for eligibility and the bidding documents may be secured from the PNOC-EDC Contracts Administration Group (c/o P.T. Tolbas local 5179) starting March 31, 2006 upon payment of a non-refundable fee of P=500.00 (Five Hundred (P=500.00)).

For the purpose of clarifying certain issues, a pre-bid conference will be held on April 7, 2006, 2:00 p.m. at the BAC Conference Room, First Floor, Building V, Energy Center, Merritt Road, Fort Bonifacio, Taguig, Metro Manila. Site inspection will follow thereafter.

Application for eligibility and sealed bids shall be received by the PNOC-EDC Contracts Administration Group, First Floor, Building V, Energy Center, Merritt Road, Fort Bonifacio, Taguig, Metro Manila not later than 2:00 p.m. (Contract Administration Group Office Wall Clock Time) of April 10, 2006 and shall be publicly opened immediately thereafter.

PNOC-EDC reserves the right to reject any or all bids or parts thereof, to waive any informality therein, to accept such bids or to award any part of the work to any bidder whose bid is considered most advantageous to PNOC-EDC.

The Chairman
Bids and Awards Committee

(PDI - March 31 & April 7, 2006)

ISABELA II ELECTRIC COOPERATIVE, INC.
Alibagu, Ilagan, Isabela

INVITATION TO BID, PARTICIPATE, PROPOSE AND TO QUALIFY

The Isabela II Electric Cooperative, Inc. (ISELCO II) is inviting Security Agencies who are interested to propose, to participate and to qualify as Security Agency of the Cooperative on - April 10, 2006, 8:00 AM. Security Agencies must submit and satisfy the following documents and conditionalities listed herein below. Participating agencies must present all Original Copies of documents for authentication and photocopies for reference.

- Letter of Intent
- Company Profile bearing all these documents:
 - DTI Certificate of Registration
 - Mayor's Permit to Operate (2006)
 - Tax Identification Number (TIN)
 - VAT Certification
 - PNP/SUSLA License to Operate
 - PADPAO Membership Certificate
 - Audited Financial Statement
 - List of Licensed-Firearms (with bonded Official Receipt)
 - List of present clientele
- Clearances (issued year 2006)
 - RTC Clearance (Civil & Criminal Cases)
 - MTC Clearance (Civil & Criminal Cases)
 - SAGSD Clearance (Camp Crime & Region 02)
 - PADPAO Clearance (of no derogatory record)
 - SSS Clearance (of no delinquent Record)
 - DOLE Clearance (of no labor cases)
 - BIR Clearance (of no delinquency record)
- BIR/Income Tax Return with photocopies of official payment and certificate of Tax Withheld.
- SSS Remittances (OBR-R-5 and R-S) January-December 2004, January-September 2005.
- Photocopies of Seminars/Trainings attended
 - Security Management
 - Gun Safety & Responsible Gun Ownership
 - Guard's Personality development

Base from the Annual Budget of the Cooperative, an amount of P=2,332,800.00 was appropriated for 33 guards. Security Guards must not be less than 21 and not more than 50 years of age.

Bidding Fee of P=5,000.00 shall be paid on or before April 10, 2006.

ISELCO II reserves the right to reject any or all bids, waive any defects or informality therein and accept only bid advantageous to the Cooperative.

(Sgd.) ENRIQUE O. DELEON
General Manager

(PDI - March 31, 2006)

PEASANT ACTIVIST Blacklisted Bangladeshi barred from entering RP

By Lella B. Salaverria

A BANGLADESHI PEASANT LEADER WAS barred from entering the Philippines yesterday after his name popped up in the Bureau of Immigration blacklist for participating in a rally critical of the administration last year.

Badrul Alam, chair of the farmer's group Bangladesh Krishak Federation and a vice chair of the Asian Peasant Coalition, was turned back aboard a Cathay Pacific flight three hours after arriving at the Ninoy Aquino International Airport at 11:45 a.m.

Alam came to the country to attend a conference on food sovereignty sponsored by the Asia Pacific Research Network, an international grouping of peasant advocates. The conference is being held from March 30 to April 3.

Ferdinand Sampo, Nasa immigration chief, said Alam was deported because he was in the immigration blacklist for joining an October 2005 rally against the government.

"That was one of the violations of the conditions of his stay here as a tourist. That is a ground for being included in the blacklist. There is nothing illegal about (his deportation)," said Sampo in a phone interview.

Alam had joined thousands of anti-Arroyo protesters in a rally on Claro M. Recto Street in Manila. Several foreign delegates from the Asian Peasant Tribunal also participated in

the mass action last year.

The militant group Kilusang Magbubukid ng Pilipinas condemned Alam's deportation.

"As far as the Filipino peasants are concerned, Badrul did not commit any crime against the Filipino farmers. The Filipino people and KMP salute Badrul and the farmers of Bangladesh for joining us in our struggle for land, truth and justice, unlike Ms Arroyo and her gang who are the real enemies of the Filipino peasantry," said KMP secretary general Danilo Ramos in a statement.

Ramos said Alam was not told the reason for his inclusion in the blacklist.

The KMP said it would ask peasant and related organizations in Malaysia, Indonesia, India, Thailand, Bangladesh, Nepal and other countries to register their condemnation of the "grossly immoral, inhuman and illegal deportation" of the Bangladeshi peasant leader with the Office of the President, the Department of Justice and the Bureau of Immigration.

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Ranging from P25 million to P40 million, the Masters Collection offers homes at a whole new level of luxury, magnificence at an unprecedented magnitude.

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INQUIRER

Vol. 21 No. 113

OPINION

Text us your feedback: Inquirer op/ name/city/message to 2207 (Globe) or 283 (Smart)

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The Philippine Daily Inquirer, Inc. has its business and editorial offices at:
 • China Room, 8th corner, Vigan and Mascardo Sts., Makati City
 • P.O. Box 2353 Makati Central Post Office (243 Makati City)
 • Our telephone numbers are 897-8808 connecting all departments
 • Editorial Fax 897-4793 897-4794 Advertising 897-4887
 • Circulation 527-3347 527-3348 528-0183/
 528-0 84 and 528-0213 Fax 528-0234
 • Circulation Customer Service Hotline 896-4000



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Force of numbers

IF THERE IS ONE INSTITUTION THAT IS DEMONSTRATING unity in adversity, it's the Commission on Elections. Newly confirmed Comelec Commissioner Romeo Brawner has disowned a previous statement attributed to him. He was earlier reported to have told the Commission on Appointments that because of the Supreme Court's decision in Santiago vs. Comelec, any people's initiative petition should, in his opinion, be rejected outright. Around the time he was expressing that opinion, Comelec Chair Benjamin Abalos was putting forward an altogether different view: There are millions of signatures? Then by all means let us validate them, regardless of whether or not the effort the signatures support is permitted or not. Hours later, Brawner said he agreed with Abalos and so now the Comelec is whole and indivisible again.

As Abalos put it, the campaign to gather signatures for a people's initiative to change the Constitution "may be a lost cause, but everyone has the right of expression." Brawner then rather belatedly noted that the Supreme Court's 1997 decision was not unanimous. "This opens the possibility of the Supreme Court reversing its decision and allowing the Comelec to entertain petitions for initiative," he said. We doubt if anyone expected Brawner to turn so quickly into a good and loyal soldier.

Abalos, however, is simply acting true to form. He has always been a good politician, which in these parts means that he has thrived in a profession in which finagling is not part of the lingua franca. As the saying goes, you cannot teach an old dog new tricks.

Abalos and the Comelec already got into hot water by pushing through with an ill-fated attempt at automating vote-counting even in the face of a Supreme Court injunction against it. If he did so then, why then obviously, he can do so again. Precisely because in politics, nothing is final and everything is negotiable.

This might have made Abalos a politically adept mayor but it further underscores the folly of his appointment and the dangers that come from putting a politician in a job meant to keep other politicians from subverting the electoral process. What appears on the surface to be a well-meaning live-and-let-live policy (count them, even if they may not matter and may even be patently illegal) becomes the first, and most crucial, battle in an effort to achieve constitutional change by any means necessary.

Leading a united Comelec, Abalos can then proceed to swiftly validate the signatures gathered by those proposing a people's initiative as a means of achieving Charter change. Then, equally, swiftly, the Comelec can say that a Supreme Court decision to the contrary notwithstanding, or even pending appeals for a reconsideration of the existing decision, a plebiscite might as well be scheduled.

The plebiscite will then be held, unless the Supreme Court issues a temporary restraining order halting it. But this the Court may or may not do. If it does, it simply places the effort in suspended animation until, as Solicitor General Eduardo Nachura so confidently predicts, the justices reverse the Court's previous ruling. If the Supreme Court doesn't issue a TRO, then a plebiscite can be held even as it ponders challenges to the exercise. The results can be announced, and pressure is on the Court to say the people have spoken and all previous challenges are therefore moot and academic.

The political flexibility of Abalos and the Comelec, for these reasons, should be a cause for unease among constitutionalists and those interested in preserving whatever is left of the integrity of our national institutions. The Comelec is making itself a party to the most ruthless and, in a sense, reckless assault on the concept of checks and balances. It is helping to isolate and make irrelevant the Supreme Court and its decisions. It is actively assisting a partisan political exercise. There is no clearer, and more glaring, example of the tyranny of numbers, than the so-called people's initiative that has received President Macapagal-Arroyo's blessing.



This is the worst time for Charter change

THERE ARE MANY REASONS WHY WE should not change our Constitution now. One is the motive of those who want to change it. President Macapagal-Arroyo wants to use it to cling to power. Speaker Jose de Venecia wants to be prime minister because he knows he will never be elected president. Former President Fidel V. Ramos wants to go back as chief executive through the prime ministership. The congressmen, governors and mayors want their terms extended. In short, their motives are selfish. Although they cite other reasons, it is clear to everybody that it is to benefit themselves that they want to change the Constitution. This is the worst reason to change it.

The framers of all our constitutions recognized the temptation of lawmakers to abuse their powers and pass laws that would benefit themselves. That is why there is a provision in the Charter that laws passed by Congress (such as increasing their salaries) cannot apply to them but become effective only after the election of a new set of legislators. Following the spirit of the Constitution, that should also apply to the writers of a new Charter. They should not benefit from the Charter that they themselves wrote.

Another reason that we should not change the Constitution at this time is the brazenness of the administration in using all means to achieve its ends. Bribery, in cash and in kind, is being used on everybody who would accept the bribes. A free three-year extension for local government officials, cash for barangay officials, jobs for relatives and friends of politicians, cash and food items to the poor herded to the barangay halls to sign the petition for a people's initiative.

There are three ways to amend the Constitution: a Constitutional Convention, a Constituent Assembly, and a People's Initiative. In the first, delegates to the convention would be elected to write the Charter. In the second, members of the Senate and House of Representatives would constitute themselves into an assembly and write the Constitution. In the

As I See It

Neal H. Cruz



third, the people themselves, through one-third of all the registered voters, can petition to amend certain provisions of the Charter.

Administration forces do not want a Constitutional Convention because they cannot be sure who would be elected delegates and therefore cannot control what they are going to write. They prefer a Constituent Assembly where pro-administration congressmen can dominate the proceedings, especially with De Venecia as Speaker who has the knack for persuading congressmen to do what he wants. But the Senate does not want to cooperate, and there can be no Constituent Assembly without a Senate.

De Venecia et al. argues that the Senate is not necessary because the House can get the two-thirds vote from among its members, and that the interpretation that the House and Senate should vote separately is wrong. But they themselves know that their own interpretation is the wrong one, so in desperation, they have turned to the last option—the people's initiative.

The trouble with this last option is that the Supreme Court has made it very clear in a previous case that there is no valid enabling law that would authorize a people's initiative. But the never-die advocates hope that because the voting in the first case was close, there is a chance that a new voting would reverse the decision.

Legal eagle Sen. Minam Defensor-Santiago, however, said that under the legal doctrine of "stare decisis," the Supreme Court should follow and uphold its decision in the first case, Santiago vs. Comelec, because "the facts in 1997 and 2006 are substantially the same."

"In 1997, there was no law providing for the

procedure to change the Charter by means of a people's initiative," she added. "Up to now, there is no such law."

"Therefore, since the facts in 1997 and 2006 are substantially the same, then under the 'stare decisis' doctrine, the Supreme Court is obliged to follow the ruling in Santiago vs. Comelec."

But because the people's initiative is a desperation move, the administration went ahead with the gathering of the signatures. Baka, makalusot. People were lured by politicians with bribes—in cash, in kind and with lies—and made to sign documents the contents of which they don't even understand.

"People's initiative" means the first move should come from the people themselves, but here, the initiative—in fact, the whole exercise—comes from politicians. It is not a "people's initiative" but a "politicians' initiative." And that is one more reason why we should not change the Charter now—the method being used violates the spirit of the Constitution itself. If they can violate with impunity the Charter now, imagine what they will do once they get the chance to rewrite it. And if they can do what they are doing now under a bicameral government, imagine what they will do in a unicameral one, without a Senate to check the abuses of the House, and where the party in power controls the three branches of government. The prime minister and Cabinet members would come from members of Parliament—which would be composed, at least in the first three years, by the present rapacious congressmen without the Senate to check them—and the justices of the Supreme Court would also be chosen by them. Can you imagine the abuses they are capable of doing with a carte blanche like that?

By their present actions, the congressmen and other officials of the Arroyo administration are showing to us very clearly why we should all resist efforts to change our Constitution. Let us wait until the present crop of politicians are out of office.

Constitutional brinkmanship

PASSION FOR REASON

Raul C. Pangalangan



Constitution until Congress provides for its implementation." Reproduced verbatim is the Court's disposition: "[T]he Comelec [is] permanently enjoined from entertaining or taking cognizance of any petition for initiative on amendments to the Constitution until a sufficient law shall have been validly enacted to provide for the implementation of the system." So how can Abalos now "take cognizance of any petition?"

But the solicitor general's optimism springs from a headcount of the sitting justices. Only Chief Justice Artemio Panganiban and Senior Associate Justice Reynato Puno remain from the original Porma Court, and both had dissented from the majority ruling.

Indeed, the Court was not unanimous on the lack of enabling legislation. Panganiban concurred only in the result, and would throw out the initiative only because it did not carry the requisite signatures. He had reservations about the majority's "restrictive holding," saying it was "all too sweeping and all too extremist... equivalent to... killing the patient to relieve him of pain. [T]he misuse of initiative does not justify a ban against its proper use. Indeed, there is a right way to do the right thing at the right time and for the right reason."

Notice, however, that even if the dissenters win the day and say that the Initiative Law is adequate, there remains one real impediment: the people's initiative can be used only for minor "amendments," not for major "revisions." Congress or a constitutional convention can make either amendments or revisions, but a people's initiative may only propose amendments.

The drafting history of the Charter shows

that they used this formula advisedly: "Revision" may involve a rewriting of the whole Constitution. [A]mending a constitution envisages a change of specific provisions."

But I am really bothered by these headcounts. They ignore the normative quality of Supreme Court decisions. Judicial decisions rise and fall on the soundness of their reasoning and conclusions, and unless we assume that judicial appointments are custom-tailored to suit a certain approach or conclusion, changes in the personalities should not entail changes in constitutional norms.

Chief Justice Hilario Davide warned in Porma about the Court "allowing itself to be used, as a legitimizing tool for those who wish to perpetuate themselves in power," especially those who, in the words of Justice Santiago Carpio, "cloak its adherents in sanctimonious, populist garb." Benjamin Cardozo called the constitution a guarantee "against the assaults of opportunism, the expediency of the passing hour... the derision of those who have no patience with general principles."

Therefore, the true defect of the current direct initiative does not lie in the doctrinal minutiae that lawyers get excited about—amendment versus revision, adequate for proposing laws but not for amending constitutions. The flaw of this people's initiative is that it does not belong to the people. It belongs to the Department of Interior and Local Government, which convened the barangay assemblies to discuss innocuous-sounding matters like "health, agriculture, education"—innocent, that is, until you get to the part "and current issues affecting the country." Orwellian lingo for Charter change. Where in the Constitution do we find "politicians' initiative?"

When the Court revisits the Porma case, let it recall T.S. Eliot: "The end of all our exploring/ Will be to arrive where we started, / And know the place for the first time."

Comments to passionforreason@gmail.com

Two different crises

ANALYSIS

Amando Doronilla



THAILAND IS THREE DAYS AWAY FROM A SNAP election called by Prime Minister Thaksin Shinawatra to seek a new mandate to blunt a widespread demand for his resignation. Re-elected last year in a landslide victory that gave his Thai Rak Thai party 375 of 500 parliamentary seats, Thaksin's political fortunes took a drastic nosedive after his government was engulfed in a corruption scandal and accusations of abuse of power, mishandling the Muslim insurgency in the Southern Island and electoral fraud.

Just days before the election, Thailand was churned by turmoil in the streets, evoking images of people power in the Philippines reappearing in another democracy but with a different political culture. The other day, up to 50,000 demonstrators marched in Bangkok's central business district pressing their campaign for the ouster of Thaksin. The campaign, led by the People's Alliance for Democracy, has been able to bring impressive numbers of people to the streets of Bangkok and the protesters have camped around Thaksin's office, forcing him to call the snap election to defuse the demand for his resignation.

There are more dissimilarities than similarities in the crises engulfing Thaksin and President Macapagal-Arroyo, and to draw parallels between them is bound to lead to wrong lessons. This article limits itself to exploring how the Philippines and Thailand are trying to solve their political stalemates within their electoral systems. It also examines a few relevant aspects, among them, the mood of the Thai military with regard to the confrontation in the streets, and the possibility of intervention by the King of Thailand, and the different electoral moods in Bangkok and the Thai countryside. Neither the Arroyo administration nor the Philippine political opposition and the President's various enemies can draw any comfort from Thailand's coming election and events associated with the discontent with Thaksin.

First, the election. In the Philippines, regime opponents are still pounding the door with their de-

mand for a snap election. We have not gone very far. Many obstacles, some legal and others related to the paucity of alternatives to replace Ms Arroyo, stand in the way. A snap election to resolve the Philippine impasse is not an immediate possibility. In Thailand, no such obstacles had to be overcome by Thaksin. While defiantly refusing to bow to demands for his resignation, he deflected the pressure to the snap election which offers an opportunity for the Thai people to express their vote of confidence in Thaksin, given all the scandals swirling around him. Calling the election was a shrewd political move.

Opinion polls show Thaksin enjoying considerable support in the countryside, where 70 percent of the country's 65 million people live. The fiercest opposition to Thaksin is based on the urban middle classes and the intellectuals. Thaksin is expected to be returned to office, just a year after his massive re-election, but with a reduced parliamentary majority. The opposition has rejected his offer to form a national unity government if he is returned to office.

Ms Arroyo cannot test her mandate with a snap election, which is unlikely. She claims support from the rural areas, but this support has appeared not in the form of votes but in expressions of support by governors and mayors during tests of strength in Congress, like the impeachment case against the President.

Thaksin has denied any wrongdoing, as Ms Arroyo has done, and has submitted this issue to the people. The Thai opposition has decided to boycott the election. This could result in a voter turnout that is so low that pro-Thaksin candidates

would fail to get 20 percent of the votes of eligible voters, the legal threshold to claim seats in parliament. Some commentators say this could force another election, or more demonstrations.

And this could also mean a failure of the electoral system. Election therefore is a not a solution to Thailand's democratic test. A lecturer at Chulalongkorn University observes, "People in other countries protest for elections, but here they are protesting against elections."

Thus, in both the Thai and Philippine political stand-offs, the basic issue boils down to a failure or breakdown of electoral systems.

Second, the king's intervention. Frustrated with their electoral system, the three opposition parties have appealed to King Bhumibol Adulyadej to name a new leader. He has sent the appeal to his Privy Council. He asked the contending parties to resolve the crisis within the constitutional system and peacefully. A military spokesperson said, "His Majesty must have been saddened" by the political turmoil, adding "His Majesty will be very happy if his subjects are unified and use peaceful methods to resolve the problem."

A revered political mediator in Thai crises, the king intervened only twice during his 60-year reign: first during a military coup in the 1970s and then when bloody rioting erupted in Bangkok in the 1990s. The king has been less generous with his interventions than the Philippine Supreme Court.

The center of the Thai standoff and democratic protest is a popularly elected leader—not a general, as in the past. Unlike the unruly recent events in Manila, no coup in Bangkok precipitated the crisis and there is very little military presence in the streets, although Thailand has had a longer history of bloody coups.

Thailand's military chief, Gen. Sonthi Boonyaratglin, has told Thaksin he does not see an immediate need for a declaration of national emergency because the country remains peaceful. He added that the prolonged rally outside the Government House poses no threat to national security.

Zero tolerance?

AT LARGE

Rina Jimenez-David



WITH THE TRANSFER OF VENUE FROM OLONGAPO to Makati, things would seem to have eased quite a bit for the young woman who has filed charges of rape against four US servicemen. In case you've been hiding under a rock in the last few months, the case stems from an alleged gang rape committed last Nov. 1 in Subic. The victim was found inside the Subic Freeport after she was unceremoniously dumped there by a group of American servicemen, according to witnesses.

Four servicemen were identified and held (by American authorities), and hearings continue to this day. Recently, Evalyn Ursua, the victim's lawyer, asked Judge Renato Dela to inhibit himself from the case since his son had once worked for a law firm defending one of the accused. The judge voluntarily stepped down, and because of alleged difficulties in finding another judge who would hear the case without bias, the Supreme Court ordered that the case be tried in Makati. Meanwhile, Justice Secretary Raul Gonzalez, who can't seem to keep his trap shut on any issue, has said that he believes charges against three of the accused should be downgraded.

Despite the transfer, the victim still faces an uphill battle. Her lawyer, who acts as a private prosecutor, has taken on the case pro bono, but has had to pay for out-of-pocket expenses such as transportation to and from Subic. Even with the venue moved to Makati, the victim still needs to cover her and her family's expenses in Manila (she hails from Zamboanga) as well as other costs related to the hearings.

FOR this reason, TOWNS Foundation, which counts Evalyn among its members (the group is composed of awardees of the bi-annual search for The Outstanding Women in the Nations Service), is raising money (and asking for volunteers as well) for a "defense fund."

While the fund-raising efforts thus far have been confined to TOWNswomen, I'm sure donations from other sources and individuals willing to help will be welcome. I don't have any details yet, such as bank accounts, etc., but if you want to help, you may get in touch with any TOWNS member, or Imelda "Emy"

Villas, the president of TOWNS Foundation. Other TOWNswomen are also looking into the possibility of having the victim enrolled in the Witness Protection Program, though Social Welfare Secretary Espie Cabral says the victim is already receiving support and counseling from her department.

While women's groups such as TOWNS scramble about and scrounge for funds to keep the case alive and strengthen the resolve of the young woman and her family to pursue it, the accused enjoy not just the shelter of the American Embassy but also the legal expertise of four different law firms whose high-paid legal eagles seem to enjoy a bottomless well of financial support.

THE US government's staunch defense of the accused servicemen, and its refusal to turn over custody of the accused to the Philippine government, give the lie to the Bush administration's declared resolve to establish a "zero tolerance" policy on solicitation of prostitution by US military personnel.

Of course, the young woman in the Subic rape case has repeatedly denied that she is or ever was a sex worker, and says she was merely socializing with the American servicemen at a bar. But as I said before, even if she were a sex worker, it should not and does not have any bearing on the case. And if the US government says it will punish any serviceman found to be paying women for sexual services, shouldn't it bear down much harder on those accused of rape? Or at the very least, shouldn't it be facilitating the legal process, instead of seeking to obstruct it every step of the way?

By way of background, Equality Now, a US-based organization that promotes women's hu-

man rights, advocated as early as June 2003 the establishment and enforcement of a zero-tolerance policy on the solicitation of prostitution by US military personnel, "noting the link recognized by the US government between sex trafficking and the demand for prostitution." As a case study, Equality Now cited the role of American forces stationed in South Korea in the commercial sex industry. A Fox TV undercover report, for instance, found American "Courtesy Patrol Officers," all members of the US military, facilitating "access by military personnel to numerous bars where trafficked women from the Philippines, Russia and elsewhere were being sold for prostitution..."

EQUALITY Now notes that the "Courtesy Patrol Officers knew that women in these establishments had been trafficked and they were familiar with the process by which club owners obtained these women and kept them to sell for commercial sex."

As a result of Equality Now's campaign, 13 congresspersons requested the Office of the Inspector General in the Department of Defense to initiate "a global assessment of US military activities that promote and facilitate sex trafficking."

The assessment was conducted in two phases: first in South Korea and then in Bosnia-Herzegovina and Kosovo. Equality Now reports that in South Korea, Courtesy Patrols who engaged in off-installation (or off-base) policing were reported to be "overly familiar" and friendly with patrons and employees of bars and clubs, rather than behaving as officers on duty. The Defense Department said such behavior could be interpreted as giving "official imprimatur to activities in the clubs," at the same time finding that "law enforcement personnel might find nothing to report if a service member paid a 'bar fine' assessed against a woman and left the club with her for an evening."

Nothing new here, you might say, given what we already know from the years when Clark and Subic and environs played host to US military bases. (More on this tomorrow)

Woman the hunter

CAN WOMEN HUNT?

I'm sure many readers will reply, "Sure, they can, and they do." But I suspect, too, that many of you are thinking of women who hunt down men rather than wild animals and that there really isn't that much difference anyway between men and wild pigs.

Seriously, try to imagine a woman going through the forest stalking deer or wild pigs and eventually bringing home game, shot with a bow and arrow.

It does happen, and it is happening right here in the Philippines among some of our Agta groups. The first time this was reported in a journal article back in the early 1980s by anthropologist Agnes Estioko-Griffin, it sparked discussions, first among academicians and eventually captured the public's imagination after Estioko-Griffin wrote up her findings for the magazine *Natural History*. (Yes, Estioko-Griffin is a Filipina. She's an Ilocana, who got her anthropology degree from the University of the Philippines. She's now based in Hawaii, married to another anthropologist, Bion Griffin.)

I'd read Estioko-Griffin's articles on Agta women hunters several times, so I was excited when I heard she was in the Philippines and was scheduled to speak at the 18th International Pacific Prehistory Congress organized by the National Museum and the University of the Philippines' Archaeology Studies Program.

Video proof

So, last Saturday, I listened not just to Estioko-Griffin, who spoke about Agta women hunters in Palanan, Isabela, but also to Thomas Headland, another anthropologist who also found Agta women hunters in Casiguran, Aurora.

At the conference, Estioko-Griffin had a special treat for participants in the form of a short video clip, taken more recently, of an Agta woman hunter. The video showed her walking through the Penabalanca river in Cagayan, amid strong rains. The waters were quite high, but the woman was steady with her gait as she looked for prey. As she crouched, you could tell she had found something. The next scene had her aiming into the bush with her bow and arrow, and then shooting.

The veterinarian in me cringed, but the anthropologist made me continue watching as she went in to get the wild pig. She had apparently killed the pig (I don't know if it was just the arrow, or if she had to do other things to finish off the pig). Before you knew it, she had the pig all trussed and secured on her back. The video clip ended with her making her way back, carrying the pig upriver even as the rains continued.

Hunters, gatherers

So there, on video, was proof that Agta women can and do hunt on their own. These reports challenge the idea, propagated through many anthropology books, that in hunting-gathering societies, men do the hunting and women forage or gather wild food plants. Often, these accounts are accompanied by explanations that women are not as physically suited as men for hunting, mainly because they get pregnant and have to care for the children.

The reports about Agta women hunters spurred other anthropologists to look for something similar among other groups. So far, the most extensive report about women hunters has been about the Aka group in the Central African Republic. In 2001, the American Anthropologist published a report by Andrew Noss and Barry Hewlett about the Aka, as well as their review of theories around women hunters. Noss and Hewlett concluded that women will hunt only if game is abundant, offering more benefits than from food-gathering activities alone.

It should not be surprising that women hunters are so rare now, given the way forests have been depleted in most parts of the world. Besides the availability of game, women will hunt only if they live in a society which is flexible enough with gender norms, allowing them to become hunters if they choose to, and that includes access to hunting technologies.

It's easy to imagine why, among lowland Filipino groups, you won't find women hunters. In most lowland groups, a young girl would never even imagine the possibility, given the way hunting is clearly defined as a male role. Some areas might even have taboos about women joining the hunt or handling bows and arrows or guns.

Noss and Hewlett emphasize that it's not biological barriers that prevent women from hunting. As shown in Estioko-Griffin's video, women can be very good hunters. I would think, too, that women could make better hunters given their patience. Noss and Hewlett also observe that the women hunters are to be found among young and older women, mothers and grandmothers. If child-rearing responsibilities prevent hunting, it's mainly among women who have infants, since carrying an infant around isn't exactly conducive to the silence and stealth needed as they stalk their prey.

Opportunities, necessity

The accounts of women hunters force us to rethink some of our assumptions about gender. Certainly, we should be thinking twice about our own biases in relation to the physical capabilities of women. We often presume women can't assume certain tasks because they're physically weaker than men, but these assumptions are often flawed, even contradictory. In the Philippines, we often say women shouldn't be lifting heavy objects because "their uterus will drop." Yet no one questions the way women have to carry around infants and children, weighing up to 20 kilos, all day long.

It's all a matter of how society opens up opportunities. We presume women can't (or shouldn't) hunt because then child-rearing responsibilities would be affected. Yet, Estioko-Griffin found that the survival rates of the children of women hunters were not any worse than those of women who didn't hunt. We find similar debates going on today, with societies tending to create so much guilt for women who decide to take up jobs outside the home. Instead of berating women, "How could you sacrifice your children?" we should be asking, "Why aren't the men doing more to help with caring for the children?"

Different societies have different "space" for women to take up opportunities. I am reminded of an Ilocana woman I met many years back, in a remote part of the Cordillera, who, after being widowed, took over her husband's farming duties, and did quite well. With the hard life in the Ilocos, it's not surprising the Ilocanos do allow their women to become more independent and assertive, certainly much more than, say, groups in the Visayas.

Watching the video clip of the Agta woman hunter and remembering the Ilocana widow who farmed reminded me of how very strong women can be. But I couldn't help feeling somewhat depressed as well, knowing that in so many instances, women assume these roles out of necessity. Necessity, they say, is the mother of invention. I'd modify that to say, necessity is the mother of all mothers: women often innovate because they have to, for the sake of their families.

Revisiting a shared past

LOOKING BACK

Ambeth R. Ocampo



indigenous. Thus, it comes as a surprise that avocado, corn and chocolate are actually "immigrants" from Mexico. Some things even keep a trace of their original Aztec names even if we have Filipinized them, like *chayote*, *kamote*, *singamas*, and, probably, even *sapote*.

Cockfighting was introduced in Mexico from the Philippines. The veneration of the Virgin of Guadalupe in the Philippines came from Mexico, and this explains the two Makati districts, one old the other new: Guadalupe Viejo and Guadalupe Nuevo. The Black Nazarene venerated in Quapo, Manila, is of Mexican origin and the miraculous black Virgin of Antipolo was the patroness of several successful galleon voyages between the Philippines and Mexico, thus her Spanish name of Nuestra Señora de Paz y de Buen Viaje or Our Lady of Peace and Good Voyage.

Many Mexican cultural and historical influences have been assimilated so seamlessly into everyday Philippine life that we now have to revisit them to appreciate them better.

A visit to the fabulous Franz Mayer museum (in an ancient hospital for women and prostitutes) was punctuated by the excitement of coming across religious carvings in ivory, now acknowledged as *marfiles hispano-filipinos*. On display were pieces of furniture, particularly sea chests or baulers that were used during the galleon trade. There were even a "Mantón de Manila" and various indigenous Mexican textiles whose designs, motifs and colors resemble some of the textiles

made by Philippine indigenous groups to this day.

Thus, the Galleon Trade moved from historical footnote to a central theme in the program because revisiting this part of our shared past is not just an exercise in academic history or antiquarian taste but reminds us that long before the word "globalization" was even coined, the Galleon Trade was the first real globalization. While globalization is a contemporary term, history shows that it began 400 years ago, when the world became smaller and the meeting between East and West was made possible through the Philippines and Mexico.

We believe that revisiting the roots of our long cultural and historic ties is a first step not just in knowing the past but, more importantly, a way to accept, explore and appreciate commonalities that form the basis for mutual understanding and friendship in the present and a platform that guides us toward a common future.

The galleon also brings contemporary relevance to issues of migration. Like Mexico, the Philippines maintains a large immigrant presence in the United States, and one wonders if we can go beyond the political and economic aspects of this issue and see the ongoing exchange or meeting of cultures and plan for the preservation of Mexican and Philippine heritage in the second generation, the children and grandchildren of immigrants.

While our diplomacy is often undertaken according to the demands of politics and economics, there are countries where culture can be used more effectively. Mexico, China, Spain, the United States, and all the countries Jose Rizal visited over a century ago are places where culture can bridge the past and the present. I used to think history was only useful for school, but now I have come to realize that the past really forms connections between us and other nations. This is another reason to revise our current history textbooks.

Comments are welcome at ocampo@ntcnet.edu

MEXICO—LAST WEDNESDAY IN MEXICO CITY, the Joint Commission for Cultural and Educational Cooperation between the Philippines and Mexico sat down to discuss a program of activities that will cover the next three years.

The head of the Philippine delegation began his opening remarks in Filipino, catching the translators by surprise and, for a brief moment, probably making the Mexican side nervous that half the day would proceed in Filipino. The Filipino greetings were then translated into English and again into Spanish, both languages being foreign and colonial to Filipinos.

That Spanish was utilized as a bridge for the delegations to communicate underscored the historic links between the Philippines and Mexico that antedate formal diplomatic relations between the two countries that only began in 1953. It is unfortunate that most Filipinos today do not know that for a long time the Philippines was actually ruled by Spain not directly from Madrid but from Mexico, and that some things Filipinos think as part of the Spanish influence in our culture are actually of Mexican origin.

Most of the members of the Philippine delegation were visiting Mexico for the first time, and yet they settled in quite fast. They discovered many commonalities, and in the process discarded, some misconceptions.

Food was one of the primary areas of mutual understanding. For example, Mexican food is richer than the so-called Tex-Mex variety popularized in Manila by American food chains and products, like Taco Bell, Pollo Loco, Nachos and Chili's. Trying various chilis, sauces, sausages and even tamales, we found not just familiar tastes, smells and flavors, but the realization of cultural exchange.

Philippine mangoes are known and appreciated in Mexico as *mangos de Manila*, while Mexican fruits, plants and vegetables are so common in the Philippines that we presumed they were in-

Lessons from RP politics

ROBERT FULGHUM LEARNED MOST OF what he really needed to know—about how to live and what to do and how to be—in kindergarten. Mine, I learned in Philippine politics. Most of these, just recently.

Some of the things I learned

1. During elections, the lesser evil isn't really the best choice. It's still evil.

2. Voting is a right. Getting counted is a privilege.

3. Calling an election official is not illegal. Wiretapping that call is. The first, a mere "lapse in judgment"; the second, a criminal act.

4. When caught cheating, deny. Then, lie. Saying sorry is the last option. But never ever admit to doing anything. The formula worked for the President, it should work for anyone.

5. You cannot have a thinking President and a thinking Vice President at the same time. One has to be mentally inferior and less experienced to achieve equilibrium.

6. It is easier to oust someone who's male and powerful than somebody who's female and extremely lucky.

7. To err is not just human, it's presidential. To forgive may be divine, but utterly stupid.

8. The pork barrel, per se, is not evil or corrupt. Lawmakers are.

9. It takes two to tango, but all of two Houses to Cha-cha.

10. Critical collaboration is the stance taken by oppositionists otherwise known as "appointees-in-waiting."

11. Coup plotters always come in three types: plain adventurist, genuine reformist and former senator.

12. People who

were ousted by

previous people

power revolts

should not be at

the forefront of an-

other people power

attempt. Else, it would miserably fail.

13. Seditious journalism does not guarantee

high readership. A police raid does.

14. You want to become a newspaper editor,

forget about taking a course in communica-

tions. Join the Philippine National Police in-

stead, and strive to be its chief.

15. When anti-riot cops bodily carry you off

a rather peaceful rally against your will (as in

the case of Rep. Russa Montiveros-Baraque.),

that's to safeguard you from harm.

16. If you're a journalist and you write

something deemed offensive by a politician,

it's libel. When a lawmaker says something

defamatory against anyone, it's a privilege

speech.

17. The State of the Nation Address is when

the country's most prominent and influential

bars come together to listen to the country's

biggest liar.

18. When in UP, they are "hard-line ac-

tivists." In Mendiola, they are "hardcore mil-

itants." In Congress, they are party-list rep-

resentatives.

How about you? What have you learned so

far?

**PHILIPPINE
LETTERS**

—LOI REYES LANDICHO,
9F Jacinta Bldg. II,
Guadalupe, Edsa, Makati City

Insensitivity of conservative views on sexuality

ON THE FRONT PAGE NEWS ITEM, "MALE nurse wants to be a she legally" (PDI, 3/16/06), Delmar Cariño referred to the petitioner repeatedly as a "male" nurse and a "man." International media have, for the most part, complied with requests from lesbians, gays, bisexuals, transgenders and queer groups to refer to individuals using nouns and pronouns which reflect the sex with which they identify themselves (regardless of the presence or absence of surgical changes). This is a practice recently institutionalized by the AP in its official stylebook.

While popular interpretations of the law

may continue to disregard individual sexual autonomy, media outfits such as the INQUIRER should be conscious of the implicit message carried by its writers' language choices.

On this, the INQUIRER has no choice but to make a political decision, an insistence on privileging sex assignment at the time of birth can rightfully be aligned with the insensitivity of conservative views regarding transsexual-ity.

—BOBBY BENEDICTO,
Department of Political Science,
Ateneo de Manila University,
Loyola Heights, Katipunan Avenue, QC

Police officers guilty of illegal detention

AKBAYAN PARTY-LIST REP RISA HONTiveros-Baraque was dragged and forced into a waiting vehicle by members of the Philippine National Police. Notwithstanding her resistance, she was brought to Camp Kanagal.

The PNP then came out with a statement denying her arrest and any intention to arrest her.

By making that statement, the PNP has unwittingly confessed to committing the crime of arbitrary detention. Article 124 defines arbitrary detention as an act of "any public employee who, without legal grounds, detains a person." The law does not fix any minimum period for the detention. The Supreme Court ruled in one case that detention for one hour already constitutes arbitrary detention.

Retired Chief Justice Ramon Aquino, in his "Commentaries on the Revised Penal Code," says "the legal grounds for detaining a person are (a) the commission of a crime and (b) any ailment, like insanity, requiring a patient's compulsory confinement in a hospital." Aquino further adds that "a person who has committed a crime may be detained by first arresting him."

Since Baraque was neither arrested for violating any crime, nor suffering from any ailment requiring her hospitalization, the PNP was clearly guilty of arbitrary detention, which carries with it the maximum penalty of imprisonment of two years and four months.

—ANTONIO C. PASTERLO,
Pastelero Law Office,
1503B East Tower, PSE Centre,
Exchange Road, Ortigas Center, Pasig City

Illegal arrests of protesters

LET ME EXPRESS MY FEELINGS TO THE poor people whom Gloria Macapagal-Arroyo has deprived of their human rights. It might be best for the Filipino people to support an impeachment complaint against Ms Arroyo because of the illegal arrests of the protesters. People have the right to express what they feel, because the Philippines is a democratic country and not governed by martial law.—Ryan Calisa, Iligan City (via e-mail)

Whether the accusations are true or not GMA is still the President of the Philippines. And she is recognized internationally.

For God's sake, let's give Ms Arroyo respect. She is working very hard to improve our economy that will benefit the poor and peace-loving Filipinos, and she deserves to be respected as a leader. She is doing her best. Let's stop the finger-pointing and too much politics. It can only stop the momentum of growth.

It's time for the leaders of both the administration and the opposition, the House of Representatives and the Senate to work together to move the Philippines forward. How happy we will be if that happens.

Let's do our share by being constructive.—Carol Macario, Abu Dhabi (via e-mail)

The United States is warned not to make the same mistake twice.

With the Cold War over and the American bases in the Philippines gone, the country has less to offer on matters of strategic interest to the United States. GMA has proven to be a very unreliable partner in the fight against terrorism despite her earlier pronouncements, which turned out to be nothing but lip service. The pullout of the tiny Filipino contingent in Iraq after the Angelo de la Cruz hostage crisis attested to her unreliability.

Besides, supporting a nationally despised person who is widely believed to have cheated to become President would be like pouring gasoline on an already burning anti-American sentiment among the people.

The Americans should advise Ms Arroyo to cut and cut cleanly before the bad turns to worse.—Ramon Mayuga, Germany (via e-mail)

**VOICES
ON INQ7.NET**

There are too many opposition leaders trying to claim that they are the voice of the people. Who is the voice of the people?

If GMA is doing a poor job, why are investors still coming to the Philippines? Why are we having an influx of tourists? I still cannot determine who the opposition is planning to bring to Malacañang to replace GMA. Does it even have one in mind?

Why can we not unite to pray for our government leaders that they will be guided by a spirit of humility and of service instead of a spirit of selfishness and self-righteousness? Why spend time planning attempts to overthrow the government and not attempts to promote tourism and nation-building?

I say everybody needs to sit back and take time to look for solutions that can help our country to improve its current situation. It will be a tough and long wait for us to see the fruits of what we plant, but it will be great.—Jaypee R, USA (via e-mail)

I believe that GMA should step down, provided that there will be a smooth transition in government. What many or a few are asking is not only for Ms Arroyo to step down but for her to bring her team along with her.

But, who do her opponents think is morally upright and qualified to replace her without trashing our Constitution? Our Constitution provides that a duly elected President should govern our country, and at present GMA is it. Although there are claims that she cheated in the election, which many believe, including myself, Philippine politics has been dirty since time immemorial and cheating is not new.

What I understand and believe is that all these people, including Ms Arroyo, are playing politics, and some people cannot accept the fact that they are being beaten by a team whose center is 411.—Jun Medrano, Las Piñas (via e-mail)

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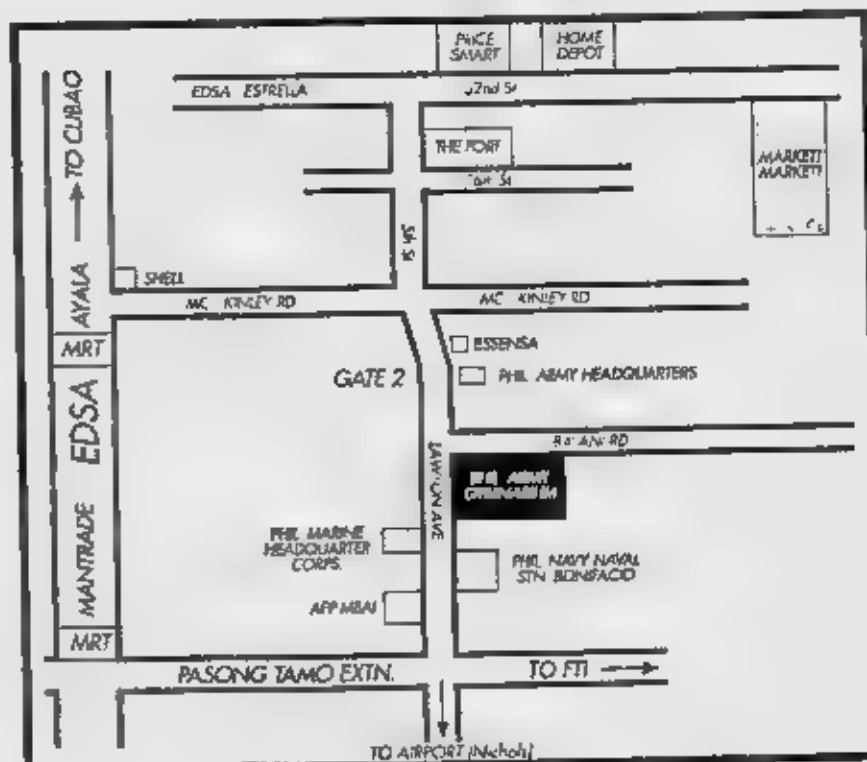
MICRONEGOSYOS

March 31, Friday

RIBBON CUTTING (Mayor Sigrido Tinga with Mrs. Tinga • Mr. Jose Concepcion III with Mrs. Marissa Concepcion • Ms. Vivienne Tan • Ms. Maricel Laxa) • **NATIONAL ANTHEM** • **INVOCATION** • **GO NEGOSYO MUSIC VIDEO** • **FEU GO NEGOSYO DANCERS** • **OPENING REMARKS** (Jose Ma. Concepcion III) • **MESSAGE** (Gen. Generoso Senga) • **BUSINESSMAN MANIC MANAOG** (Leo Martinez) • **INTRODUCTION OF PROGRAM AND INTERACTIVE SESSIONS BY HOST** (Carelle Mangalilag) • **FORUM 1**: "MICRONEGOSYO, KAPANGYARIHAN NG KABABAIHAN" [Moderator - Pia Arcangel, Panelists: Myla Villanueva (MDI Group Holdings) • Myrna Yao (National Commission on the Role of Filipino Women) • Cheese Ledesma (The Big Chill) • Jeanne Bañez (Balut Eggpress) • Florida Banayat (Phil. Air Force Officers Ladies' Club) • Merle Alferex (MSA)] • **TESTIMONY**: "ANG BALANSYADONG BUHAY: PAMILYA'N NEGOSYO" (Maricel Laxa) • **FORUM 2**: "POSIBLENG NEGOSYO, ANONG BABAGAY SA'YO?" (Moderator - Karen Davila, Panelists: Les Reyes (Reyes Haircutters) • Richie Cuna (Fiorgetato) • Chit Juan (Figaro) • Rowena Villegas (Wynski) • Karl Tan (Phil. Amalgamated Groceries and Supermarkets Association) • Agnes Car (Women Inventors Assoc. of the Phils., Inc.) • **MICRONEGOSYO - NOW NA!** (Arnel Ignacio) • **MAKATANG NONOY: ISANG TULA HANDOG SA KABABAIHAN** (Ony Carcamo) • **FORUM 3**: "PERANG PANG-NEGOSYO, SAAN KA NGA BA TATAKBO?" [Moderator - Cherry Mercado, Panelists: Ma. Corazon Dabao (AFPMBAL) • Bert Galvan (GMA Rural Bank of Cavite) • Jessica Barrun (People's Credit and Finance Corporation) • Noel Camacho (Bayan Foundation) • Ma. Teresa Reyes (BPI Family Savings Bank) • Rafael Serrano (First Macro Bank) • Derick Rasalan (PSBank)] • **TESTIMONY**: "PAGNEGOSYO KASAMA ANG KAPUSO'N KAPAMILYA" (Anthony Pangilinan) • **TALK**: "KALAYAAN SA KAKAPUSAN" (Francisco Colayco) • **FORUM 4**: "MGA PAYO AT GABAY SA TAGUMPAY" [Moderators - Anna Periquet and Carl Balita of Radyo Negosyo, Panelists: Maoi Arroyo (Hybridigm) • Rommel Juan (Binalot Fiesta Foods) • Doyee Tumpatan (First Quadrant) • Ricardo Collantes (Kookai's) • Johnlu Koa (The French Baker) • Sandy Javier (Andok's) • Ronald Pineda (Folded and Hung)]

April 1, Saturday

SKILLS DEMO/TRAINING BY LE CORDON BLEU, TESDA-NCR, DOST, TLRC, AND REYES HAIRCUTTERS:
POLVORON AND PASTILLAS MAKING (Laura Lazaro - WIAP) • **CHOCOLATE CANDY MAKING** (Anecita Pablo - TLRC) • **PAPER TOLE** (Shirley Fabros - Approtech Asia) • **REFLEXOLOGY** c/o Women Center • **MEAT PROCESSING AND DIMSUM MAKING** c/o Approtech Asia • **COOKING AND FOOD PREPARATION DEMOS** • **BASIC HAIRCUTTING** • **WEB DESIGN** (Mark Fernandez - TESDA-NCR) • **TOMATO-BASED PRODUCTS** c/o Approtech Asia • **COMPOST TEA BREWER** (Capt. James Fros Reamon - ICIL) • **AUTOCADD** (Freddie Estacio - TESDA-NCR) • **PRESERVED SAMPALOC AND TEA MAKING** (Rita Ritz - WIAP) • **HANDSON BAKING DEMO (HAND-MIXED PINOY PAN DE SAL) AND MICRO-BAKERY BUSINESS MENTORING** (Johnlu Koa - The French Baker) • **CELLPHONE REPAIR** c/o Approtech Asia • **SESSIONS ON STARTING A BUSINESS: HOW TO START A FRANCHISE BUSINESS** c/o Association of Filipino Franchisers, Inc. • **"LAKBAY KAINAN: GOURMET PARA SA MASA"** (Ludette Dayrit - Le Cordon Bleu) • **HOW TO START A FOOD CART BUSINESS** c/o Food Cart Association of the Philippines • **USAPANG MICRONEGOSYO** • **HOW TO START A SALON/BARBERSHOP** c/o Reyes Haircutters • **HOW TO START A HOME SPA BUSINESS** (Cathy Brillantes - Turvill - Founding President, Spa Association of the Philippines) • **"BIGATIN KA BA SA NEGOSYO?"** (Willie Revillame) • **BUSINESS MENTORING BOOTH** - Mentoring from 11 am to 3 pm c/o Anna Periquet (Anna Marie Home Collection (Philippines), Inc.), Alberto Fenix, Jr. (President, Pulp Tech), Lin Deres (Franchise Manager, Goldlocks), Johnny Filart (President, One Source Port Service, Inc.), Bing Limjoco (Chairman, Philippine Franchise Association), Dante Ang, Jr. (President, Manila Times), Ray Villafuerte (Chairman, Lara's Gifts and Decor), Maret Bautista (Vice President, Follosco Group of Cos.), Mel Alonzo (Chairman, SBGFC), Victor Tan (President, Bobson), Jose Magsaysay (President, Potato Corner), Honor Dimapilis (Faculty, DLSU), Bong Abad (Faculty, DLSU), Jojo Mitra (President, Purolong Makapuno), Richie Cuna (President, AFFI/Forgelato), Rommel Juan (President and CEO, Binalot Fiesta Foods), Rosemarie Lee (President, Memory Magic) and Rene Cantas (Consultant, BPO Industry)



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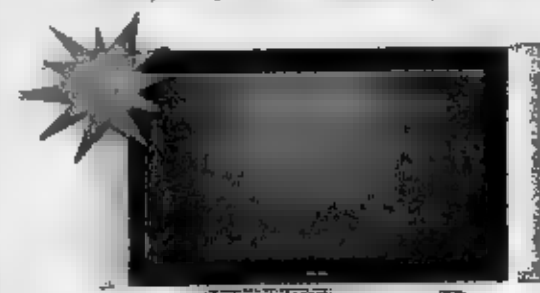
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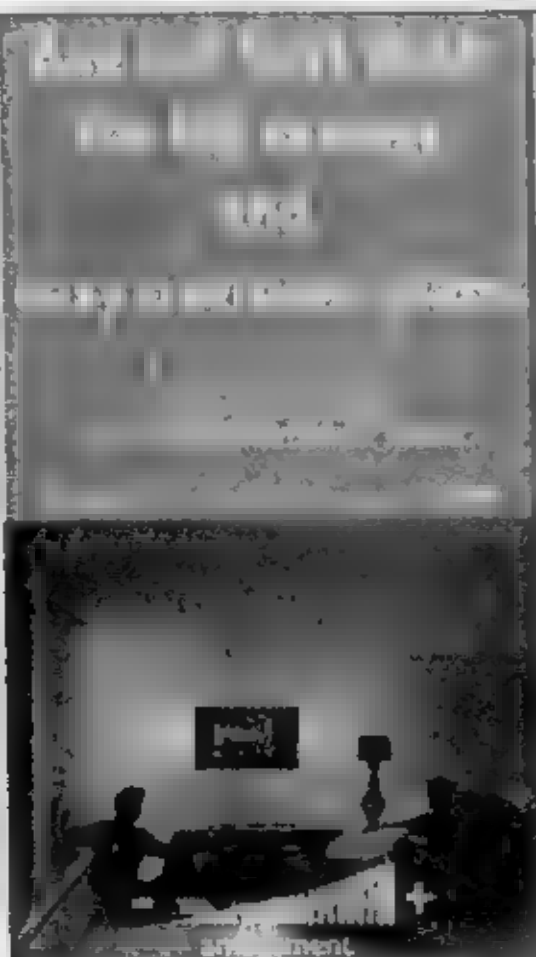


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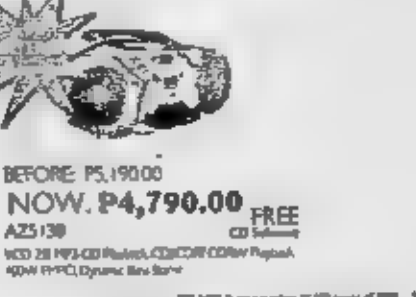


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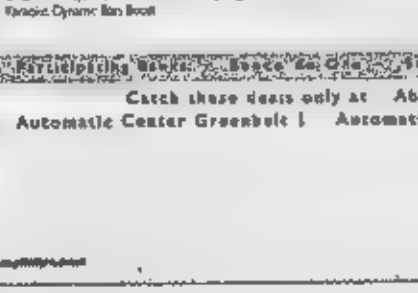


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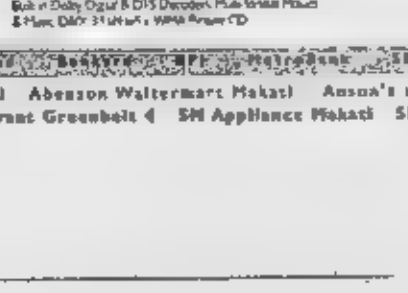


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PHILIPS

sense and simplicity

First OFW bank for 'world's greatest workers'

From page A1

President said.

The new bank will receive remittances sent by OFWs through postal offices abroad. It will send the money to their loved ones through automated teller machines (ATMs) that it will put up in the 2,000 post offices throughout the country.

In December 2004, the Commission on Filipinos Overseas estimated the total number of OFWs at 4.9 million, including 3.6 million on temporary employment and 1.3 million working without legal documents.

'Novel' idea

Macasaet told reporters that the bank's creation was a "novel concept," noting that OFWs currently remit their money through the existing banking system, such as through the Philippine National Bank and Allied Bank, or informal channels.

"So instead of going, say, to a branch of a certain bank, all they have to do is go [to a post office abroad], remit the money and send it here, and we receive it and we have 2,000 post offices here," he said.

"We will be radically different because we will be using the post offices abroad and we'll be using the post offices here," Macasaet said.

He said he planned to talk to Postmaster General Dario Rama so that the new OFW bank could have access to the post offices nationwide.

Negotiations will also be made with postal offices abroad, particularly in the United States, the Middle East and the European Union, to facilitate the remittances of the Filipino workers, he said.

Last year, Macasaet said the OFWs in the United States sent the biggest amount of remittances at \$6 billion, followed by those in the Middle East (\$1.4 billion), Europe (\$1.4 billion) and Asia (\$1.1 billion).

Informal channels

Through the new bank, he said, the government intended to corner 20 percent of the amount that the OFWs normally send home through informal channels. Remittances sent this way

amount to \$2 billion, he said.

Macasaet said the OFW bank would offer lower service fees, charging 20 to 30 percent less than what the existing banking system collected. At present, banks charge \$5 to \$20 per remittance.

The new bank will also offer better foreign exchange rates compared to other banks, he said.

"When an OFW sends money, the rate is \$51. They (banks) give you only P49, we'll probably give them a little more," he said.

Macasaet said the OFW bank would offer other services, such as free e-mail services in the post offices here for the families of migrant workers.

For a "minimal" fee, the families can get in touch with their loved ones through the Voice Over Internet Protocol, a new technology where they can talk with their relatives via the Internet.

Legal requirements

Right now, Macasaet said he was completing the legal requirements to set up the OFW bank. These include securing approval from the Bangko Sentral ng Pilipinas and the Securities and Exchange Commission.

It will be the first time for the PPSB to venture into a project involving OFW remittances since the bank mainly deals with microfinancing and rural lending.

18 branches nationwide

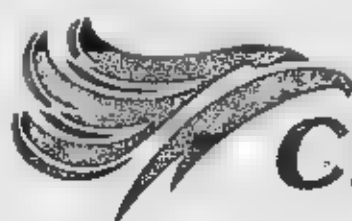
PPSB has 18 branches nationwide. Last year, it earned P30 million, the same amount it made in 2004, Macasaet said.

Asked whether the new OFW bank intended to replace Philippine National Bank and other banks here, Macasaet said it would actually "complement the banks."

"We should have a bank for our new heroes, that is the objective of the President," he told reporters.

The President said the sacrifices, problems and perils faced by the OFWs abroad did not escape the notice and concern of the government.

For this reason, she said, the government intends to help them from the time they leave the country up to the time they return home.



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THE DAILY GOSPEL



Friday, March 31, 2006

4th Week of Lent

1st Reading: Wls 2:1, 12-22

Gospel: John 7:1-2, 25-30

Jesus went around Galilee; he would not go about in Judea because the Jews wanted to kill him. Now the Jewish feast of the Tents was at hand.

But after his brothers had gone to the festival, he also went up, not publicly but in secret.

Some of the people of Jerusalem said, "Is this not the man they want to kill? And here he is speaking freely, and they don't say a word to him? Can it be that the rulers know that this is really the Christ? Yet we know where this man comes from, but when the Christ appears, no one will know where he comes from."

So Jesus announced in a loud voice in the Temple court where he was teaching, "You say that you know me and know where I come from! I have not come of myself; I was sent by the One who is true, and you don't know him. I know him for I come from him and he sent me."

They would have arrested him, but no one laid hands on him because his time had not yet come.

Commentary

The truth incurs wrath and provokes the evil that reacts and refuses to hear. The simple presence of someone who is good and holy, and speaks of God, causes those who choose evil to react violently and beset the one who is a living witness against them. But the prophet and those who are just will not respond in kind. They will rely on God, in spite of torture, revilement, condemnation and a shameful death. They do not know God and they turn against the innocent. Jesus the just one is hunted for the kill by his own. He must even worship in secret. But they do not know him at all. They do not perceive in their evilness and violence that Jesus comes from God and he knows God.

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Cha-cha a 'dry run' for impeachment battle, says Joker

By Philip C. Tubeza

PRESIDENT MACAPAGAL-ARROYO "does not care" if the campaign to amend the 1987 Constitution fails as long as she wins anew when the opposition again tries to impeach her in June, Sen. Joker Arroyo said yesterday.

Arroyo said the efforts of the President's allies to amend the Charter—whether through a constituent assembly or a people's initiative—were all meant to be a "dry run" for the impeachment battle she was certain to face.

And going by the num-

bers—only 50—that the House minority was able to muster against a constituent assembly, the President cannot be impeached anymore, he said.

'Smart little girl'

"This is a dry run for an impeachment. You know, that smart little girl, she's a good operator. She has succeeded in measuring just how far the House opposition can go after her," the maverick administration senator said at a press briefing.

"I'm not saying she cannot be impeached. I'm only saying that

with the numbers now, she cannot be impeached," he said.

The House minority needs 79 votes to impeach the President. According to Arroyo, the President used the Charter change debates to smoke out those who would vote against her in the House, and discovered that the numbers had not changed.

"Look at the arithmetic. The most that [the House minority] can get, the maximum they admit, is 50 [votes]," Arroyo said, adding:

"In impeachment, you need 79. The House opposition

[members] say they have 50 against a constituent assembly. So, it's short of 79, and it's about the same number as those who voted [against the President] in the impeachment [last year]."

Real target

Arroyo said the President might have the administration flexing its muscle and using its resources for Charter change, but her real target was the second impeachment complaint.

He said all this had dispelled the notion that the President was

just a technocrat with no political savvy to last in office.

"She's underrated. She has already measured [the political situation]. However, I disagree with her goals, I have a grudging admiration for her," the senator said.

He added: Just think about it. She has the House, the executive department, the governors and mayors, the business community, and she has divided the Liberal Party, the Makati Business Club, even the [Catholic bishops].

"And she has a [Vice President] Noli [de Castro] who has no ambitions. What more can you ask for?"

Pimentel: Conflict of interest

SENATE MINORITY LEADER

Aquilino Pimentel Jr. questioned lawyer Raul Lambino's dual role as a member of the Charter change advocacy commission and spokesperson of Sigaw ng Bayan that's spearheading the signature campaign.

"Being a member of the commission, he is supposedly a public official. He should not be involved in the initiative," Pimentel told the INQUIRER.

He said Lambino's high-profile role in the signature campaign only revealed the government's hand in the exercise.

"Indeed, the hand of the government is dipped into this pie, as it were... That is contrary to all the requirements of constitutionalism and the rule of law," Pimentel said.

But Lambino said: "There's no conflict of interest between my role as an advocate of constitutional reforms and as spokesperson of Sigaw ng Bayan. In the first place, I'm not a government official or an employee."

He said he was "invited" by the President to be part of the advocacy commission.

He stressed that except for transportation fare for his speaking engagements, he did not get paid by the commission.

the initiative, he said. "We have asked government officials to assist us in informing and educating the people on the issue. What's wrong with that? That's part of their duty to inform and educate the people."

Lambino also said his group fully explained to the people the advantages of amending the Charter and shifting to a parliamentary system before asking them to sign up. With reports from Jerome Aning and Christine O. Avendaño

GMA rides Charter change train

From page A1

lose it through destructive politics." Bunye also said that unless the country went through Charter change in order to overhaul its economic and political system, "a cycle of stagnation and degradation will continue to hound us."

Con-Ass continuing

But Ms Arroyo's move may have been premature because Interior Secretary Ronaldo Puno said the government could only take part in a people's initiative only after the Comelec shall have validated the results of the signature campaign and endorsed a plebiscite on Charter change.

Puno also said the move to gather 195 signatures for the House to convene itself into a constituent assembly (Con-Ass) to amend the Constitution would continue. It was Puno who led this campaign as head of Kampi, the President's political party, before he accepted his Cabinet post.

"They are still trying to do that because they believe they can still get the 195 votes anytime now. They also want to avoid constitutional challenges, and they believe the 195 votes will be an easier issue to deal with in the Supreme Court," he said.

Budget Secretary Rolando Andaya justified Ms Arroyo's seesawing on her preferred mode of amending the Charter—from a constitutional convention, originally, to a constituent assembly last year, to a people's initiative yesterday.

"I think the bottom line is that she wants Charter change in

whatever mode," he said.

Andaya also said the government could only provide a budget for the people's initiative if the Comelec orders a plebiscite.

"That is just an opinion of the President, but for us to put in funds for this particular endeavor, we'll have to wait for a positive ruling from the Comelec calling for a plebiscite," he said.

Albay Rep. Joey Salceda, economic adviser to the President, said that holding a plebiscite would cost only P2.192 billion, and that this could be easily funded in a reneacted budget (similar to the situation in 2004) or in the 2006 budget. Salceda said Ms Arroyo could dip into her contingency fund to augment the financing for the plebiscite. He said the plebiscite could possibly be held in July, but that this might be a tight schedule.

He also noted that a recent survey showing that 43 percent of Filipinos supported Charter change was a compelling reason to hold a plebiscite to determine the public pulse on the issue.

"I don't think the opposition has anything to fear in a plebiscite if they believe that 84 percent of the public hate the President and she has thrown her full support behind Charter change," Salceda said.

Doesn't come free

Puno vehemently denied that the government had a hand in the people's initiative.

"If there is anything that the opposition might say with a degree of

credibility, it is that there needs to be more information in these barangay assemblies. But to say that we bought or coerced the barangay captains, I don't think that is true," he said.

When asked if he was aware who had financed the signature campaign, Puno said: "I don't know; you tell me. Obviously, this is something that does not come free."

Puno claimed that the department of Interior and Local Government did not realize that the signature campaign was being undertaken at such a massive scale until after the groups behind it had reached their goal.

"We thought it was just an information campaign geared for 1,000 barangays. Even the opposition underestimated the capability of Sigaw ng Bayan. Apparently it was a much larger exercise than that, and I congratulate them for accomplishing what they did," he said.

Sigaw ng Bayan, composed of 100 multisectoral civic and non-government organizations, is spearheading the signature campaign for Charter change nationwide.

Unanimous

The decision to proceed with the verification of signatures has the full backing of all the members of the Comelec, according to Commissioner Romeo Brawner.

"We in the commission are unanimous in saying that as far as initiatory or preparatory steps on the people's initiative are concerned, the Comelec, as held by the Supreme Court in the landmark case of Santiago vs Comelec... has an active

role," Brawner told reporters.

But when asked if the commission had an en banc resolution to back Comelec Chair Benjamin Abalos Sr.'s decision on Monday to begin verifying the signatures, Brawner said: "No, not yet."

He said the Comelec issued last week an en banc resolution allowing election registrars to release the list of voters to whoever would ask for it.

Full steam ahead

Sigaw ng Bayan is pressing ahead with the verification of 5.6 million signatures it said it had gathered. (See related story in Across the Nation, Page A22.)

"We are now in the process of having the signatures verified with the municipal, city and provincial election registrars. We are verifying signatures as we gather them," Sigaw ng Bayan spokesperson Raul Lambino said in a phone interview.

Lambino, a lawyer and law professor at the University of the East and University of Pangasinan, shrugged off warnings that the proponents and election registrars risked being cited for contempt by the Supreme Court if they insisted on verifying the signatures without an enabling law.

"We are not bothered by the threats that cases will be filed against us. If they're going to file cases now, let them go to the courts now. These are desperate moves by people who can't offer anything for the welfare of the people," said Lambino, a member of the Charter

change advocacy commission.

Mere opinion

The commission, chaired by Lito Lorenzana, is spearheading a campaign to educate the people on the need for constitutional reforms.

Lambino said Sigaw ng Bayan viewed the high court's oft-cited 1997 ruling on a people's initiative as a "mere opinion" that should not be used against such an exercise.

"It's a mere opinion of the issue, it's not jurisprudence. Therefore, it should not be given basis toward the implementation and realization of a people's initiative. As far as we are concerned, that is not the issue of the controversy," he said.

In its March 1997 ruling on the Santiago vs Comelec case, the tribunal said Republic Act No. 6735 (The Initiative and Referendum Act) was inadequate to cover a people's initiative to amend the Constitution.

It also said the Comelec was "permanently enjoined" from entertaining any such petition until "a sufficient law" had been enacted to implement such a system.

No promises

Lambino, a former member of the Consultative Commission that recommended the scrapping of the 2007 elections preparatory to a shift to the parliamentary system, dismissed claims that the signatures were gathered in exchange for promises of money and food.

To claims that local officials were behind

JDV sees 'interim parliament' by July

From page A1

jump-start the initiative process by filing a petition proposing an amendment to the Constitution.

Replacing Congress

De Venecia is confident that the interim parliament can immediately take the place of the present bicameral Congress. He quoted RA 6735 as saying that if ratified by the people, the shift to a unicameral parliamentary system—the amendment being pushed by the initiative—"shall become effective [on] the day of the plebiscite."

The Speaker also said the interim parliament would be able to complete all the other proposed amendments before Christmas.

Only when the people elect the new members of parliament in June 2007 can the government fully shift to the parliamentary system, he said.

Rep. Constantino Jaraula, the point man in the House-backed Charter change drive, said congressmen and senators would become automatic members of the interim parliament until June 2007 "to finish the process of amendment and revision of the Constitution, because the people's initiative allows only limited amendments."

RA 6735 as enabling law

And until the Supreme Court en banc rules with finality that there is no enabling law for a people's initiative, the process of amending the Charter should continue, De Venecia said.

"The contention of the people's organizations, which is also the contention of our legal experts, is that we already have an enabling law—RA 6735. The only reason being raised by those against the people's initiative is the 1997 Supreme Court decision," he said, adding:

"If there's a challenge, the Supreme Court should revisit this particular people's initiative and clarify things once and for all. Millions of voters are staking their signatures... How can the Supreme Court, or Malacañang, or Congress, be higher than the sovereign will of the people?"

De Venecia said the high court should "reconsider its position given the different set of circumstances obtaining now."

He pointed out that there were no complete signatures in 1997, referring to the signature drive mounted by the People's Initiative for Reforms, Modernization and Action (Pirma) during the Ramos administration.

"This is a completely new face. I think we now have in excess of 12 percent... The signatures could reach more than 10 million," he said.

De Venecia said Gleo Guerra, a director of the Supreme Court's press information office, should not have said it was clear from the tribunal's 1997 decision that the people's initiative needed an enabling law.

He said the tribunal spoke on its own without relying on functionaries.

On Wednesday, Guerra said the high court had ruled that RA 6735 was "inadequate to cover the system of a people's initiative."

She said those pushing the signature drive for Charter change would have to abide by that ruling.

'Panic mode'

The speed with which the people's initiative is proceeding has triggered panic among the senators, according to House Deputy Majority Leader Antonio Cerilles and Antique Rep. Ezequiel Javier, vice chair of the House committee on constitutional amendments.

In a joint statement, Cerilles and Javier described as "baseless and irrelevant" Resolution No. 478, signed by 21 senators questioning the role of the Department of Interior and Local Government in the ongoing signature drive.

They said the adoption of the resolution showed that the senators were "in panic mode, knowing that with the people's initiative, their relevance could be jeopardized..."

Cerilles said the senators should not ignore the clamor for Charter change because "our political structure has become stagnant, and only suits prima donnas who want to grab attention."

But consumer welfare advocate

Raul T. Concepcion said his group, the Consumer and Oil Price Watch (COPW), would gather support from the private sector to launch a nonpartisan information drive on Charter change.

Not take a position

According to Concepcion, the business sector will not take a position regarding moves to effect a shift to a parliamentary system of government but the private sector will exert efforts to keep the public informed.

"The role of the business sector is to act as a

convenor and invite resource persons to share their views and help the people understand the issues," Concepcion said.

He said that he had met with five business leaders, and that he hoped to convene an expanded group early next week to join the information drive.

"The COPW will question the legality of the people's initiative considering that the Supreme Court has declared the law on such an initiative an insufficient basis for a grass-roots campaign to amend the Constitution," he said. With a report from Ronnel W. Domingo

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4 lawyers' groups seek disbarment of Gonzalez

From page A1

ministration of justice" and placed the legal profession in "disgrace."

The Counsels for the Defense of Liberties (Codal), Young Lawyers Group, Lawyers League for Liberty and Alternative Law Groups yesterday announced that they would file with the Integrated Bar of the Philippines (IBP) on Monday a complaint calling for the dropping of Gonzalez from the "Roll of Attorneys."

"We cannot close our eyes to the fact that Secretary Gonzalez continues to commit acts that violate the rights of others and defeat the ends of both substantive and procedural justice considering his position," Neri Colmenares, Codal convenor, said at a press briefing.

Colmenares said Gonzalez should be more circumspect with his statements and should stop shooting from the hip.

Told about the complaint, Gonzalez said: "Let's wait until the Supreme Court decides on that. How can I get a fair hearing before the IBP when they are the complainant. They are the ones who should be disbarred for doing that."

He said he was no stranger to that kind of complaint.

"In fact, I already had two disbarment cases that Supreme Court dismissed," the justice secretary said.

He said that IBP president Jose Anselmo Cadiz was critical of the government.

Gonzalez is also no stranger to suspension.

Suspended in 1988

In 1988, the Supreme Court suspended Gonzalez, then the Tanodbayan, for assuming the duties of the newly created post of Ombudsman. He was appointed Tanodbayan in 1986.

In a five-page draft complaint, the lawyers' groups accused Gonzalez of committing acts "that do damage to his function and the legal profession."

The groups said Gonzalez "has not only violated the Constitution and the laws but also his duty and oath as a lawyer, and is therefore unfit to remain a member of the legal profession."

They cited Gonzalez's alleged violation of "laws, rules and procedures" by "constantly, arrogantly and volubly" preempting and prejudging cases and issues being heard and deliberated at the Department of Justice (DOJ).

The groups said this resulted in the "violation and damage to the constitutional right to due process, and to civil and political rights of the people."

They took exception to Gonzalez's statement that the arrest of former Social Welfare Secretary Corason "Dinky" Soliman was legal, thereby prejudging the outcome of any complaint she may file against her arresting officers.

Police arrested Soliman on March 17 as she and other members of the Black and White Movement (BWM) were about to take a stroll at Baywalk along Roxas Boulevard. The BWM is calling for the ouster of President Macapagal-Arroyo.

Premature declaration

The lawyers' groups also questioned the justice secretary's premature declaration of ABS-CBN's liability in the "Wowowee" stampede while it was still under investigation by a DOJ panel.

The stampede killed 71 people, mostly women and elderly, and injured 900 fans of the TV show on Feb. 4.

Gonzalez had also insinuated that the so-called Batasan 5 party-list lawmakers were "rebels."

By declaring that the lawmakers had diverted congressional funds to the New People's Army, the armed wing of the Communist Party of the Philippines, without offering an ounce of proof, Gonzalez virtually preempted any inquest or preliminary investigation involving the respondents, the lawyers said.

Too beautiful to be jailed

They said Gonzalez disgraced the legal profession when he "betrayed his ignorance of the law" when he said that actress Susan Roces was "too beautiful" to be jailed and that former Vice President Teofisto Guingona was too old to serve a prison term.

The groups said Gonzalez also violated his oath to obey all laws and his duty as an attorney under Section 20 (f) Rule 138 of the Rules of Court "to abstain from all offensive personality and to advance no fact prejudicial to the honor and reputation of a party or witness."

Under the Code of Professional Responsibility, the groups said, Gonzalez was liable for violation of Rule 13.02, which bars a lawyer from "issuing statements in the media regarding a pending case tending to arouse public opinion for or against a party."

They added that Gonzalez also violated the provisions of Republic Act No. 6713 or the Ethical Standards Act and Republic Act No. 3019 or the Anti-Graft and Corrupt Practices Act.

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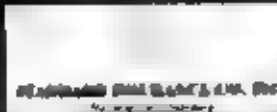
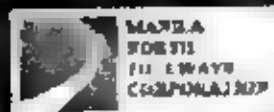
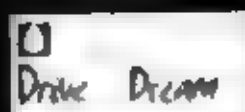
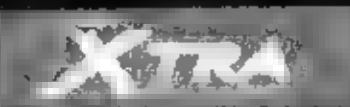
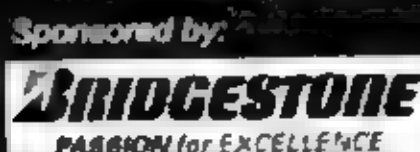


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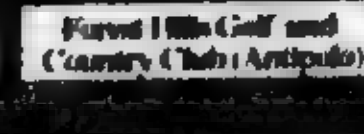
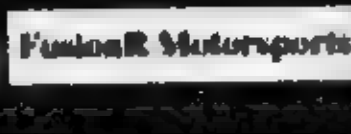
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Cebu rejects Cha-cha signature bid

By Jhunnex Napallacan
PDI Visayas Bureau

CEBU CITY—EXCLUDE CEBU PROVINCE FROM the people's initiative campaign to change the Constitution.

The Cebu Municipal Mayors League (CMML), with the support of Gov. Gwendolyn Garcia, will release a manifesto opposing the campaign, as its members believe it is illegal and unconstitutional.

The plan to come up with a manifesto was decided on Tuesday night during a meeting attended by Garcia and 33 of the 52 mayors of the province.

Also present was former Gov. Pablo Garcia, father of the incumbent governor.

The governor was not also

pleased upon hearing the complaints of most of the mayors that they were being bypassed by the Municipal Interior and Local Government (MILG) officers, who reportedly initiated the signature campaign during the synchronized barangay assemblies on Saturday.

Dalaguete Mayor Ronald Alan Cesante, CMML President, said he personally favored the people's initiative but he would bow to the sentiments of the majority of the Cebu mayors.

Cesante, however, said that while the CMML would be opposing the people's initiative, they would make it clear in their manifesto that they would continue to support President Macapagal-Arroyo.

He said the manifesto would be crafted by lawyer Fabio John Garcia's, the governor's brother and consultant, and provincial board member Victor Maambong.

Cesante said the manifesto was expected to be released today. Lawyer Garcia said the document would be based on the serious legal challenges to the people's initiative campaign following the decision of

the Supreme Court, in the case of Santiago vs Commission on Elections. The High Court then declared that the enabling law for the people's initiative campaign was insufficient.

Besides, lawyer Garcia said, the signature drive might not be good for the President because of the impression that it was being initiated by her allies so she could stay in power until 2010.

He said there was no need to change the Constitution just to let the President stay in power, pointing out that she is the legal president and she can finish her term until 2010 without amending the Charter.

Lawyer Garcia clarified that the governor supports Charter change, but through legal and constitutional means.



PROTESTERS wear masks to denounce efforts to gather millions of signatures to force a revision of the Constitution. JULY MANQUEZ/AP

Dirty water kills boy in town near landslide site

By Jani Arnaiz
PDI Visayas Bureau

ANAHAWAN, SOUTHERN LEYTE—A 9-month-old boy died and 58 others in this town fell ill from diarrhea that health authorities attributed to contaminated water.

Lani Tomol, a nurse at the Anahawan District Hospital, said the baby was declared dead on arrival at the hospital on Saturday, the same day most of the diarrhea cases were first reported.

Tomol said the number of cases brought to the 25-bed hospital rose to 59 on Wednesday from 53 the previous day. She, however, said 16 were released on Wednesday noon.

According to her, Ernesto Cahoy, the hospital chief, found that of the number of patients, 24 children were suffering from amoebiasis, while others had severe gastroenteritis.

Gov. Rosette Lerias told the INQUIRER that the town's water supply got contaminated because of

a leak in the reservoir of the town's water system.

The leak has since been repaired, she said. Lerias said she had already sent medicines to the town with specific instructions that they be given for free.

The governor said that although most of the patients came from Anahawan, a few diarrhea cases were reported in the rest of the Pacific towns.

The Pacific towns are the

municipalities of St. Bernard, San Juan, Anahawan, Hinundayan, Hinunangan and Silago.

Confined at the district hospital were 44 diarrhea cases from Anahawan, eight from St. Bernard, two from San Juan, two from Hinundayan, one from Hinunangan and two from Silago.

Lerias said there was no need to declare a state of calamity in Anahawan because the diarrhea incidents there had already been addressed.



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ROUNDUP

Hostage-taker shot dead

DARAGA, Albay—Soldiers and policemen shot and killed a fugitive charged with attempted homicide several years ago when he resisted arrest and took hostage a retired policeman in Barangay Bascaran here on Monday. The suspect, Alberto Bulawan, who was reportedly armed with a 38 cal. revolver, returned to his village to attend the wake of a relative, but his presence was tipped off to the nearby Army detachment. He was killed after reportedly seizing retired SP01 Vicente Mirabel. Bulawan's family has accused the lawmen of overkill.

Edgar Alajo, PDI Southern Luzon Bureau

MILF peace monitor ambushed

GENERAL SANTOS CITY—A member of the Moro Islamic Liberation Front (MILF) peace monitoring team was shot and wounded in an ambush in Sultan Kudarat on Tuesday. Supt. Danilo Posadas, town police chief, said Abdulbasit Pangawilan, alias Dabir Ali, was headed for Laguilayan Village on a motorbike when he was attacked. The victim was hit in the belly and brought to the hospital in Sultan where he was declared out of danger. Two suspects, Turmano Lumabas and Gilbert Mangana, have been arrested. Police have yet to determine the motive for the ambush.

Aquino Zonia, PDI Mindanao Bureau

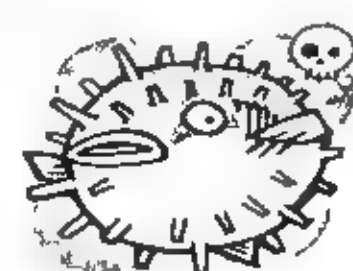
Ex-Albay mayor yields

MALINAO, Albay—After hiding for more than five years, a former mayor of this town who was found guilty of usurpation of authority surrendered to local police authorities on Monday. Salvador Moll, a three-term mayor at the time of his conviction, disappeared in 2001 when the Supreme Court affirmed a decision handed down by Judge Mamerto Buban Jr. of the Tabaco Regional Trial Court Branch 18, who found him guilty of a case filed by then Mayor Remy Clavelillas. Moll received a jail sentence of six months to one year and nine months. He said he was giving up so that he could have peace of mind. He is now detained at the provincial jail.

Job Balen, PDI Southern Luzon Bureau

5 downed by puffer fish

BACACAY, Albay—Five persons, including two children, were hospitalized after eating puffer fish, locally known as "butete," on Sunday night in Barangay Sagod here. The suspected food poisoning cases were identified as Arjay Beruela, 7, Aldrin Beruela, 11, Bienvenido Barbacena, 50, and Magdalena Barbacena, who were brought to the St. Michael Hospital here, and Santos Batailler who was taken to the Ziga Memorial and District Hospital in nearby Tabaco City. They all experienced dizziness and vomiting, a few minutes after eating "pikadilyong butete."



Job Balen, PDI Southern Luzon Bureau

Cop shot dead; pa wounded

CAMP VICENTE LIM, Laguna—A quarrel over a woman led to the killing of a policeman and the wounding of his father inside a grille bar in Nasugbu, Batangas on Monday night. Chief Supt. Prospero Noble, Calabarzon police director, identified the fatality as SPO2 Mario Rotairo, 40, of the Pasay City police's Special Operations Group. Noble said Rotairo and his father Eustaquio, 76, both of Barangay Kayitlinga, Alfonso, Cavite, were drinking with three other men inside Triple J Videokebar in Barangay Kayitlinga when Rotairo and a companion had a heated argument over a guest relations officer. An armed security guard, Apolinario Lumbres, a former Philippine Constabulary soldier, shot Rotairo in the face with an M-14 rifle. Another suspect fired at the older Rotairo with a .45 cal. pistol in the shoulder.

Marlon Ramos, PDI Southern Luzon Bureau

Hacking suspect found dead

TABACO CITY—A man hacked dead his former partner inside a shanty here on Sunday night, police said. Jonalyn Bisco, 24, was found lying in a pool of blood at around 7 p.m. Sunday inside the hut she had shared with her new partner, Edison Buella, 21. Bisco died from hack wounds in the chest, said Supt. Renato Batailler, police chief. A bolo found at the crime scene led to the identity of the suspect, Mamerto Bariko, 26, but police found him the next day hanging with a rope around his neck.

Job Balen, PDI Southern Luzon Bureau

Police back-ups hired

LEGAZPI CITY—With a population of 200,000 and growing, this city has only 108 policemen—dramatically below the average police-to-population ratio of 1:1,000 in Bicol. Thus, the city government has organized and trained 100 public safety officers (PSOs) who are tasked with assisting the police in patrolling the streets and directing traffic. The bicycle-riding PSOs are duty bound to enforce ordinances and arrest petty crime violators, like jaywalkers and people smoking in public places. As of November last year, the PSOs had arrested 175 violators of the anti-smoking ordinance. Supt. Robinson Ortega, former city police chief and now PSO head, said the council had allocated P3 million for the salaries of the PSOs.

Edgar Alajo, PDI Southern Luzon Bureau

Bontoc bishop to be installed

TJGGEGARAO CITY—Bishop-elect Rodolfo Beltran, parish priest of Aparri, Cagayan, will be installed as bishop of Bontoc Mt. Province, on May 31, a week after his ordination as bishop by Fernando Feloni, the new papal nuncio to the Philippines. Beltran, who holds a Doctor of Philosophy degree, is the eighth Cagayan prelate to become a bishop. A former parish priest of Tuguegarao, Beltran is known for his home study program for the Negrito people, fishermen, housewives, carpenters and vendors in the province. The program is jointly undertaken with the Cagayan State University.

Estanislao Caldez, PDI Northern Luzon Bureau



Children who lost their parents to the landslide that buried Guinsaugon Village in St. Bernard, Southern Leyte, lay their graduation caps on the mound of earth where their homes used to be.

By Carla P. Gomez
PDI Visayas Bureau

Of the country's 25 million children aged between 5 and 17, 16 percent, or at least 4 million are working, Padilla said. She cited key findings of the 2001 Philippine Survey on Children, the latest study on child labor in the country.

A total of 1.08 million children working were reported to be engaged in heavy physical work.

Children over 15 years old but under 18 may be allowed to

present:

By Estanislao Calder
PDI N. Luzon Bureau

Erosion



The MGB, he said, was also monitoring a section of the zigzag road in San Jose Village in the town.

"We only knew three had been hatched because we dug the nest. We covered it [with sand] immediately," Doctor said.

Fuertes, PDI Northern Luxon
Bureau

ment of high-paying jobs for caregivers.

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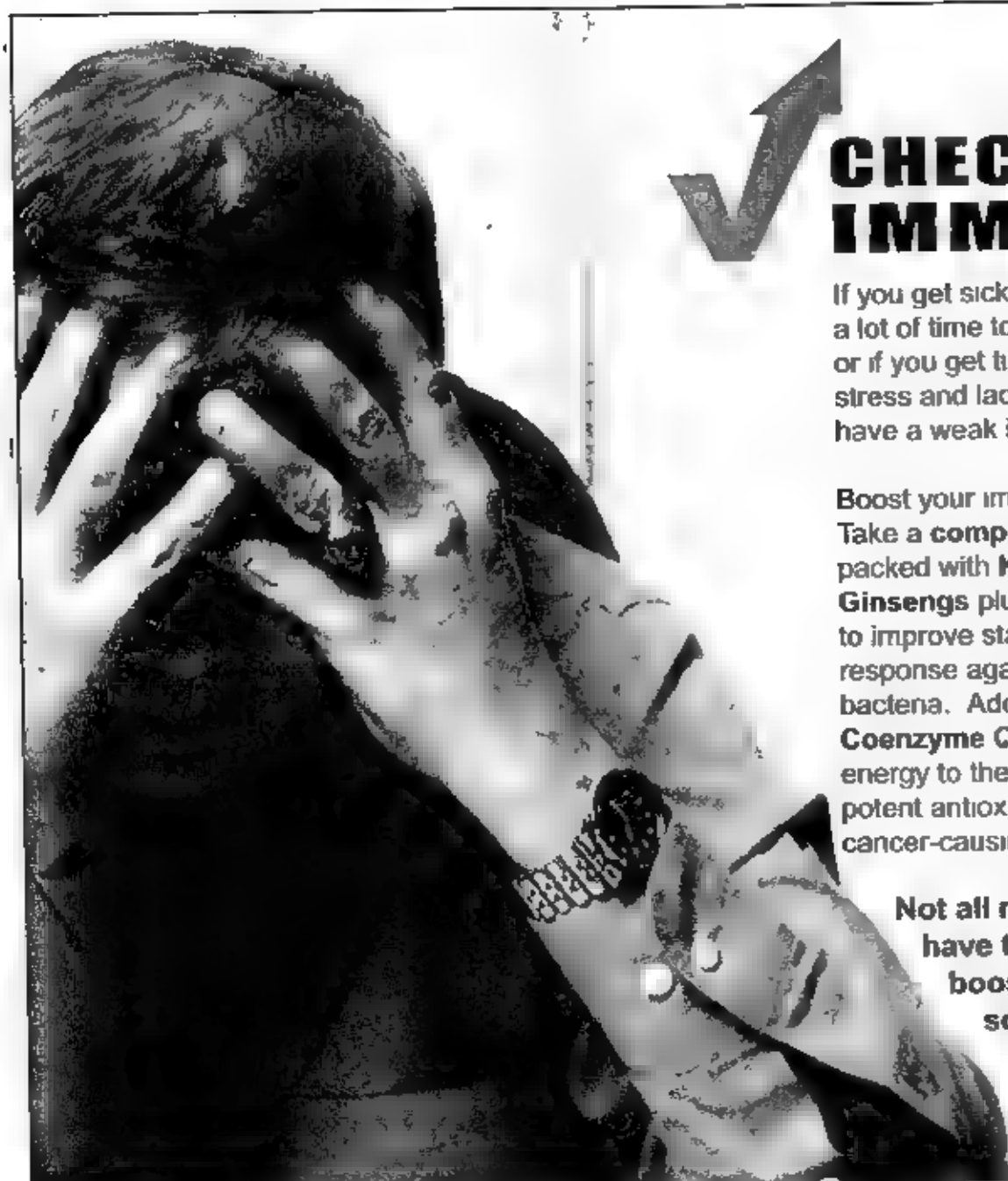
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By Nelson F. Flores

THE LAWYERS OF ILOCOS SUR Gov. Luis "Chavit" Singson are preparing libel charges against San Juan Mayor Joseph Victor Ejercito for calling Singson a murderer and a coward at the Sandiganbayan last Wednesday.

In a luncheon meeting with reporters yesterday, Singson said he saw Ejercito muttering something at him during a break in the trial of deposed President Joseph Estrada, but did not actually hear what the mayor, a son of Estrada, said.

According to Singson, however, an overhead microphone and camera of the GMA 7 television network had caught Ejercito's words and the governor has instructed his lawyers to secure a copy of the videotape.

"I could see him, it looked like he was saying something to me which I could not hear. I asked, 'What? what?' but we were quite some distance from each other so I could not understand what he was saying. He was outside the courtroom, I was inside," Singson recounted to reporters in Filipino.

'Murderer, coward'

He said that among the lines that the television station recorded from Ejercito were: "*Manamatay tuo ka*" [Murderer] and "*Duwag, duwag, duwag!*" [Coward].

Singson said Ejercito had accused him of being a killer and tagged him as the mastermind in the killing of Oliver Chan, the provincial auditor of the Commission on Audit in Ilocos Sur.

Chan was the auditor who alleged that Singson had billions of pesos worth of unliquidated cash advances.

Singson said it was impossible that he would seek the death of Chan whose sibling was the husband of his first cousin Milda.

"It should be Erap [Estrada] who should be investigated because he and his family are the ones who would gain from Chan's death. After all, they have already made use of him to destroy my reputation," he said.

Some months after testifying in the impeachment trial, Chan was killed in an ambush in Ilocos Sur.

Singson said he would ask his lawyers to file the suit in Ilocos Sur.

"It's much more convenient for me because I am from there. His [Ejercito's] lawyers can have a holiday," he said.

The governor said his lawyers were still studying how much they would ask for damages but said the eventual figure would be substantial.

Ejercito told the INQUIRER that he was "emotionally carried away" by the sight of the grieving members of the Chan family who attended the hearing.

"I could feel what they felt. They want to do something but they cannot, because the person involved is powerful," Ejercito said.

"We must not lose track of the main issue against Singson," said Ejercito who is Estrada's son by an ex-stalet, Guia Gomez.

'Prove your innocence'

Singson, meanwhile, challenged Estrada to prove his claim of innocence on the plunder charges against him with evidence, noting that so far the jailed ex-President had been using his court appearances not to disprove his guilt but to merely try to discredit his (Singson's) credibility as the prosecution's main witness.

"After two days in the witness stand and months of preparation by his more than a dozen lawyers, Estrada has not yet presented any piece of document or issued any concrete testimony to back up his desperate lie of innocence," Singson said in a statement.

Instead, he was using his appearances before the Special Division to publicly discredit me, which will not do anything on his case," he said.

Singson said Estrada's attempts to discredit him would not do him any good.

"Like those who are following the plunder case, I am tired of hearing Estrada's repeated lies and his recitals of innocence without seeing any documentary proof. I am raring to see evidence from him. He should remember that when I said he was a plunderer, I produced documentary evidence. Not only that, they were supported and corroborated by other evidence and testimonies from other witnesses such as those of the more than a dozen bank officials," Singson said.

Lawyer wants Erap reinstated if acquitted

By Nelson F. Flores

FORMER PRESIDENT Joseph Estrada should be reinstated in Malacañang to serve the remaining years of his term if acquitted of plunder and perjury charges, a law professor who

had served in the toppled leader's administration said yesterday.

Rufus Rodriguez, who headed the Bureau of Immigration under Estrada and belongs to a battery of lawyers defending the former President in his ongoing trial at the Sandiganbayan, told reporters that under the rule of law and in the interest of justice, wrongfully accused individuals should be restored to their former status.

"Being a country that prides itself in following the rule of law, there has to be restitution if he is acquitted," Rodriguez said. "Justice requires that upon acquittal, he should assume the presidency."

Anticipating acquittal by the Sandiganbayan, Rodriguez said, "Estrada should be allowed to serve the remaining three-and-a-half years of his term as President which was taken from him by President Macapagal-Arroyo."

Even under Labor Law, employees who

have been illegally dismissed are reinstated and paid back wages, Rodriguez added.

A popular uprising ousted the 68-year-old Estrada in 2001, two-and-a-half years into what should have been a six-year term. Ms Arroyo, who was Vice President at the time, assumed the presidency.

Estrada questioned Ms Arroyo's assumption of office on grounds he was unlawfully removed, but the Supreme Court ruled that he had "constructively resigned" and Ms Arroyo's assumption of the presidency was lawful.

Rodriguez also expressed confidence that Estrada will breeze through cross-examination by prosecutors.

"If a witness is forthright and sincere, it would be very difficult for prosecutors to grill him. They will just extract more testimonies that will debunk the allegations," he said.

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SIX DIGIT

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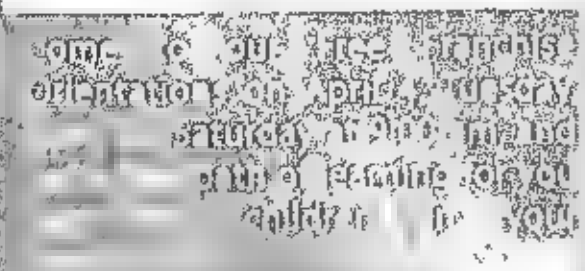
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WHAT'S INSIDE

■ Ex-barangay council member killed in Makati

/A26



■ 2 container vans with P3M worth of coffee recovered in Malabon

/A27

■ Marikina to put up shelter for young detainees

/A26



17 drug 'hot spots' under tight watch

By Jocelyn R. Uy

POLICE ARE CLOSELY MONITORING 17 alleged "drug hot spots" in the southern part of Metro Manila.

Based on records from the Southern Police District (SPD), several barangays in Las Piñas, Muntinlupa, Makati, and Taguig cities and Pateros town are "seriously affected" by illegal drugs.

According to SPD Chief Wilfredo Garcia, 35 percent of Las Piñas City is a drug "hotspot" based on their information that peddlers and users of illegal drugs have holed out in seven out of its 20 barangays.

In Muntinlupa City, police are keeping a tight watch on three of its nine barangays known for drug peddling. Meanwhile, the illegal trade has also found a place in four barangays in Makati City, Garcia added.

Taguig City accounted for 11 percent of the illegal trade, with Barangay Ususan and Maharika Village in Barangay Lower Bicutan on top of the list, records showed.

Strategic location

"The area is a strategic location for drug pushers since it is at the periphery of commercial districts. There are also a lot of transients in the vicinity," Garcia told the INQUIRER yesterday.

Last month, the city's Drug Enforcement Unit (DEU) and the Taguig Anti-Crime and Illegal Drugs Task Force stumbled upon a drug den in Barangay Ususan.

Police had compared it to a smaller version of Pasig's shabu mart busted by police raiding teams recently.

But DEU Chief Senior Insp. Eufonio Obong told the INQUIRER yesterday that after the raid, the number of drug peddlers and users in the area have dwindled.

In Pateros, the smallest town in Metro Manila, drug users have found a home in Barangay Sta. Ana, Garcia said.

Records showed that Pasay City and Parañaque City have not registered serious cases of drug cases. But Garcia said they are closely monitoring Barangay San Dionisio in Parañaque and Malibay in Pasay, he added.

Countermeasures

Just two weeks ago, the Philippine Drug Enforcement Agency swooped down on three houses on Tramo Street, Pasay and seized P75,000 worth of metamphetamine hydrochloride or shabu. They also arrested two suspected drug users during the raid.

The SPD has beefed up countermeasures against drug peddlers through the Barangay Anti-Drug Abuse Council (Badac), chaired by barangay captains, Garcia said.

Couple shot dead in front of young girl

By DJ Yap

BONNET-WEARING GUNMEN SHOT DEAD A woman and her live-in partner in full view of her 10-year-old daughter the other night in Quezon City.

The victims were identified as Charlie Dancel, 40, alias Macaombao Banto, and Marilyn Dancel, 32, who lived with her daughter at 26 Sarmiento St., Barangay Santa Monica, Navaliches.

The police said two male suspects barged into the house, which also doubled as a sari-sari (variety) store, at 7:20 p.m. and suddenly peppered the victims with bullets using .45-caliber pistols.

The house used to be occupied by Charlie's first wife, who left a few months ago, said investigator-on-case SPO1 Salvador Buenavieja of the city police criminal investigation division. The men, however, spared the young girl, Marilyn's daughter by her husband, Buenavieja said.

Charlie died on the spot. Marilyn was rushed by barangay watchmen to the Quezon City General Hospital, but she died before reaching the hospital.

The police recovered several .45-caliber spent shells, as well as aluminum foil and other illegal drug paraphernalia at the crime scene. The motive for the killings has not yet been established, investigators said.

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Binay political ally slain

By Tarra V. Quismundo

FORMER BARANGAY COUNCIL MEMBER Edilmar Pancipane was shot around 5:30 p.m. Wednesday by three unidentified men.

The incident happened just hours after a daring ambush claimed the life of Chief Insp. Renato Marasigan in Pasig City.

Close range

Pancipane, 35, of Barangay Rizal, Makati City, died in front of a commercial establishment at the corner of H Santos and J.R. Ruzal Street in Barangay Tejeros, near the Makati-Manila boundary.

He had multiple gunshot wounds. One bullet was fired at close range hitting him in the nape.

Police suspected that the unidentified gunmen used .45-caliber pistols similar to those used in the Marasigan slaying.

Outraged

"He was a dear friend and a dependable political ally. I am outraged by this senseless killing and I believe I owe him that much to ensure that his killers are brought to justice," said Makati Mayor Jeyomar Binay in a statement.

Investigation by the Makati Police Department (MPD) showed that Pancipane had just alighted from his maroon

CRV and was walking towards the back of the vehicle when two of the three killers approached him from behind.

Getaway

The gunmen stood on either side of him and placed their arms around him, police said, then shot him.

After ensuring that the victim was dead, the men boarded a passenger jeepney bound for Manila.

Recovered at the crime scene were four slugs from handguns.

MPD Homicide has yet to determine the motive for the killing.

Binay directed the MPD to keep him updated on the progress of the investigation.



ALL EYES

Passersby are not only drawn to the lively music of this cool trumpet player but also to his unusual eyeglasses.

JOAN BONDOL

Art tilt to highlight forest park launch

By Tina G. Santos

AIMING TO INSTILL AN APPRECIATION for art and nature in children, a group of environment advocates will launch an art competition as part of the Earth Day celebration next month.

With the theme "Kabataan Para sa Kalikasan," the contest will be held at the Liwasang Kalikasan, a lightly-wooded area on the Cultural Center of the Philippines (CCP) grounds, which will soon be transformed into an ecological showcase.

The on-the-spot painting contest, which is open to all young aspiring artists, is divided into two categories: 3 to 6 years old category and 7 to 12 grouping.

"We realize that the children are the most important, because they will be the ones to carry on what we are doing," Winner Foundation president Regina Paterno told the INQUIRER.

The gathering is expected to draw a larger than usual Sunday crowd to the park as the contest will coincide with the inauguration of the area.

Environment advocates are hoping the area could be used as a venue for cultural and educational activities, much like the controversial Arroceros forest park in Manila.

Winner Foundation is the caretaker of the Arroceros park.

Registration begins at 9 a.m. of April 1.

By early afternoon, judges will pick the best works in each category through a criteria that will award points for originality and "freedom of expression."

Marikina City will soon have shelter for young detainees

By Nancy C. Carvajal

MARIKINA'S CHIEF OF POLICE SAID A SHELTER for minors who break the law would soon be set up by the city government.

Senior Supt. Manuel Gaerlan made the announcement even as he gave the assurance that city law enforcers followed the provisions of the International Rights of Children even though debate on the proposed comprehensive juvenile justice legislation was still ongoing. "We are actively scouting for a place that could be used as a shelter for minors in conflict with the law," he said.

Gaerlan said meetings were being conducted with various sectors, including the judiciary, on the location of the shelter. In the meantime, he said juvenile suspects were no longer detained with adults. He cited the case of three boys aged 11, 12 and 13 who were ar-

rested yesterday for allegedly breaking into a construction office through a window and carting away appliances and cash. The three minors allegedly stole some P2,000 worth of cash and items like carpets, blenders and kitchen ware.

Gaerlan said that instead of putting the children in jail, they would be handed over by barangay officials of Concepcion Uno to the local Department of Social Welfare and Development. "We have been protecting the rights of minors, even though the proposed juvenile justice law has yet to be approved," the city's chief of police told the INQUIRER.

The Comprehensive Juvenile Justice System Bill, sponsored by Sen. Francis Pangilinan, is now pending in the Senate. Among others, it raises criminal liability to age 12, requires separate detention facilities for children, and establishes recreation programs at the community level.

Apartments razed in fire; P8 million lost

By Jocelyn R. Uy

PROPERTIES WORTH ABOUT P8 MILLION went up in smoke after a fire gutted a two-story apartment building in Parañaque City before dawn yesterday. No one was hurt in the three-hour blaze.

SF02 Felipe Caguing, arson investigator, said the blaze appeared to have been caused by a Kia Prego van on fire parked in one of the garages of the two-story building on Hernandez Compound, Narra Street, Barangay San Martin de Porres.

Witnesses told fire officials that the vehicle, owned by one of the building's tenants, Peter Yebes, was already in flames at around 3:30 a.m.

A short circuit could have triggered the fire, Caguing told the INQUIRER yesterday.

An initial investigation also revealed that the apartment building was supposed to be sold next month.

12 units

The blaze quickly spread to the apartment as the garage's ceiling was made of light materials, Caguing added.

It was put out at 6:19 a.m. on the fifth alarm.

Caguing said the damage reached roughly P8 million because the building housed 12 units.

Two vehicles were also destroyed in the fire.



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Effective January 27, 2006, the public is hereby notified that **ALLEN SANTOS**, whose photo appears above, is no longer connected with the **SINGLE SINCE BIRTH CLUB** as founding member.

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INVITATION TO SUBMIT OFFERS

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Offers will be received, opened and tabulated in the presence of the offerors on April 26, 2006 at 3:00 p.m. at the PMO Conference Room, 8th Floor, 104 Gamboa St., Legaspi Village, Makati City.

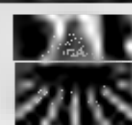
Interested parties may secure the sale documents for a non-refundable fee of P1,500.00 from the PMO Marketing Office.

If the Offer for Sale becomes a failure PMO reserves the right to negotiate immediately with the Offerors or any third party for the purchase of the Asset.

Interested parties are advised to deal directly with PMO.

For more information, please call Ms. Jane V. Santiago at telephone numbers 818-4733; 892-2145.

(PMO March 28, 31 & April 1, 2006)



Republic of the Philippines
DEPARTMENT OF AGRARIAN REFORM
Provincial Agrarian Reform Office
San Francisco, Agusan del Sur

NOTICE OF COVERAGE AND FIELD INVESTIGATION

Pursuant to Section 7 of Republic Act No. 6657, the following landowners are hereby notified that their properties

LANDOWNER	LOCATION	TITLE NO.	LOT NO.	AREA	DATE OF OCULAR INSPECTION
1. Seneon Viscaya	Libertad, Bunawan	P-7201	6160 PIs-4	7 2849	
2. [REDACTED]	San Andres, Bunawan	UT	2714, PIs-67	6 4893	
3. Demetrio Abanquez	Patrocinio, Sta. Josefa	P-7660	1550, PIs-4	9 5448	05/10/06
4. PDIC/Federico Dayon			2105, PIs-4	8 1181	05/11/06
5. [REDACTED]			1991 PIs-4	10.0000	05/11/06
6. Adolfo Calampol			2214, PIs-4	10 6802	05/10/06
7. [REDACTED]	Sampaguita, Varuela		1990, PIs-4	10.0000	05/11/06
8. [REDACTED]	Poblacion, Varuela				
Corazo	Magesayay, Varuela		2145, PIs-4	9.0000	05/10/06
TOTAL				74.1073	

are now covered under the Comprehensive Agrarian Reform Program under DAR Administrative Order No. 4, Series of 2005 the right to choose the area to be released must be exercised within thirty (30) days from the date of Publication of the Notice of Coverage. Failure to exercise this right of retention within the prescribed period shall be considered as a waiver of the right/privilege to apply for exemption/exclusion or retention, nominate children as beneficiaries or submit evidence determining just compensation.

Under Executive Order No. 405, we shall request the Land Bank of the Philippines to determine the reasonable Land Value of the said properties being acquired pursuant to Section 17, of Republic Act 6657.

March 27, 2006.

(SGd.) MARINO M. GAYRANON
Provincial Agrarian Reform Officer III

(PMO-March 31, 2006)

P3M worth of stolen coffee recovered

By Nancy C. Carvajal

TWO CONTAINER VANS WITH MORE THAN P3 million worth of coffee and reported stolen last Sunday in Manila, were recovered in a compound in Malabon City late afternoon the other day, the city's chief of police said.

Police Senior Supt. Moses Guevarra said the truck that carried the two 20-foot container vans filled with boxes of Nescafé Classic coffee was missing. The truck was parked inside the garage of NLT Trucking Services at the Harbor Center along on Road 10, Tondo, Manila, when it disappeared.

Acting on a tip from an informant, Guevarra sent a team to the Samlet compound, Duiog Asoge St., Tugatog. It arrived as the vans were being dismantled. He said the operation, conducted by the local police, was led by the chief of the Northern Police District Intelligence Unit, Supt. Jimili Macaraeg.

The suspects, who were dismantling the van's steel walls, scampered away leaving

their tools behind when the policemen arrived, Guevarra said.

"No one was arrested in the operation. The truck, with plate number CMN-654, was not in the area. We are still conducting follow-up operations," the police chief said.

He added that the contents of one of the vans had already been unloaded.

"They used an acetylene torch to destroy one of the van's steel doors and padlock," Guevarra said.

The arrival of police prevented the opening of the second van, leaving its contents intact. Guevarra said at least eight men were seen dismantling one van and transferring its content to another vehicle.

Investigation showed that the truck's driver, Rene Sabaero, parked the loaded truck at around 5 a.m. on March 26 inside the Harbor Center. Further investigation showed that the stolen truck was allowed to leave though it was driven by an unidentified man using a pass not listed in the trucking company's gate pass receipts.



SAFETY NET

This young boy uses a net barrier off the Manila Yacht Club to cross the waters after gathering sea shells from the bay.

EDWIN MACAPAG

Color coding may be suspended during school break

By Tarra V. Quismundo

THE NUMBER CODING SCHEME MAY BE suspended during the long school break.

The Metropolitan Manila Development Authority Traffic Operations Center (MMDA TOC) said yesterday the governing council could decide next week on the proposal to lift temporarily the Unified Vehicular Volume Reduction Program (UVVRP) or number coding.

"The (MMDA) chair (Bayani Fernando) is proposing that, because it's summer vacation, we could lift UVVRP. A comparative study last year showed that the number of vehicles (dropped) during (the long school break) ...," said MMDA TOC Executive Director Angelito Vergel de Dios yesterday.

The study conducted by the MMDA TOC's Traffic Engineering Center found that the vehicle volume in seven major thoroughfares leading to school zones in Metro Manila dropped by an average of 29.11 percent on days when schools were closed, compared to days when there were regular classes.

The drop in number of vehicles was even more significant than the reduction resulting from the UVVRP, which was about 20 percent of the regular number of vehicles on metro roads on weekdays.

"Hopefully, the suspension would not affect the traffic situation. It would be (done) on an experimental basis so that, somehow, we could give added convenience to motorists," the traffic chief told the INQUIRER.

"The UVVRP kept vehicles off the roads on certain days based on the last digit of their plate numbers. These vehicles can be out on the street only between 10 a.m. and 3 p.m., called the 'window hours'."

The school break suspension was proposed during the meeting of the agency's policy-making body, the Metro Manila Council (MMC), Wednesday.

Longest suspension

The suspension, if approved, could be effected from April to the first week of June or before schools reopened, said Vergel de Dios. If implemented, it would be the longest suspension so far of the traffic scheme.

Of Metro Manila's 17 municipalities, 13 are implementing the UVVRP. The cities of Marikina and Pasig have dropped the program, because of their location on the edge of the metropolitan area. Makati and Pasay, on the other hand, implement the UVVRP scheme without the "window hours."

The TOC's comparative vehicle volume study, completed in 2005, counted vehicles from 6 a.m. to 8 p.m. on Manila's major roads such as the stretch of España Boulevard (from Nicanor Reyes Street to Mabuhay Rotonda) and A.H. Lacson (from Nagtahan to Dimasalang), both near the University of Santo Tomas campus; and Taft Avenue (between Ayala Boulevard and Padre Faura), a section lined by colleges and universities.

In Quezon City, the TOC checked vehicle volume on Marcos Highway (from Katipunan Avenue to Imelda Avenue), and Aurora Boulevard, an artery leading westbound to the University Belt in Manila and eastbound to schools in the Katipunan and Cubao areas. Also part of the study was the stretch of Edsa from Timog Avenue to Ortigas Avenue, and the Ortigas Avenue section from Edsa to F. Rodriguez.

Search on for top Manila artists

MANILA MAYOR LITO ATIENZA TODAY opened the nomination for this year's recipients of the "Diwa ng Lahi at Patnubay ng Sining at Kalinangan" awards. The conferment of the said awards was started in 1963 by the late Mayor Antonio Villegas to give due recognition to Filipino artists who have dedicated their talents and skills to promote their respective fields of artistic endeavor.

The deadline for submission of nominations is on May 5. Nominations should be submitted to the Manila Tourism and Cultural Affairs Bureau, Room 137 of the Manila City Hall. For inquiries, call Tel. No. 525-4736.

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Townhouse project for Taguig's teachers

By Jocelyn R. Uy

PUBLIC SCHOOL TEACHERS IN Taguig City will soon have a home they can call their own.

The local government announced yesterday that it is set to build a teacher's village at a two-hectare spread in Purok 5, Barangay Bagong Tanyag.

Mayor Freddie Tinga, in a statement yesterday, said low-cost two-story townhouses with eight-unit clusters will be soon be available to qualified public school and daycare center teachers at a very minimal price.

According to Ana Santos, city's Public Information Office head, beneficiaries of the housing project will only pay a monthly amor-

tization of P500 to P800 in ten years.

Based on the development plan, each 25-square-meter unit has two bedrooms, a kitchen, a bathroom and a living-dining area. Open courts, pocket parks, foot paths, a recreational facility, health and daycare centers will be built to spruce up the community.

"This project is favorable to us teachers since we live on a meager salary and these days are hard times," said Helen Candaza, a teacher of R. Papa High School.

Vicky Parrales, a daycare center teacher of Barangay Tipas said she was looking forward to a having a home of her own.

"It's really hard to make ends meet especially when I am just

renting a place and I have other bills to pay," she said.

The teacher's village is just one of the city's urban housing project, incorporating new construction technologies that will reduce the overall cost and construction time of each building.

The housing project would mean 800 homes for Taguig's homeless by the end of the year, said Santos.

"These townhouses will not only address basic issues on squatting and peace and order problems but will give qualified residents a living, breathing and self-contained community that will serve as a model for future housing programs of the country," she added.



Water bill

With the absence of water pipes in their community of informal settlers along the railway in Makati City, residents get their supply from enterprising persons like this girl who sells the basic commodity in plastic bottles.

BY ZAMORA

Never too late for MRT

By Tina G. Santos

UNTIL PAYMENTS ARE ON THE way, the Metro Rail Transit (MRT) stands to lose three of its stations to the Mandaluyong City government after one year.

The MRT stations—Ortigas, Shaw and Boni Avenue—were among the real properties of delinquent tax payers that were auctioned off last Friday by the city government.

"Nobody bid for the MRT property. In such case, the property will automatically be acquired by the city government," public information officer Lee Chan told INQUIRER.

However, city legal officer Eddie Fernandez, citing Chapter 6 Section 263 of the Local Government Code, explained that the MRT has one year to redeem the properties before the local government officially consolidates full ownership of the three rail stations.

"Should the MRT fail to redeem the property, the ownership thereof shall be fully vested on the local government," said Fernandez in a statement.

The MRT had not settled its financial obligations to the city for the past six years, he added. The MRT has standing arrears amounting to P1.483 billion.

Blessed Teresa 2006 nominees

THIS YEAR MARKS THE 19th national search for the winner of the Blessed Teresa of Calcutta Award, a joint project of the Alfonso Yuchengco Foundation and the Junior Chamber International Philippines-Manila.

The search is intended to focus public attention and confer recognition on those who have dedicated at least 25 years of his/her life in the service of the less fortunate members of the Philippine society. For inquiries, please call the Blessed Teresa of Calcutta Award Committee at Tel. Nos. 525-2631 / 525-6814.

'Butterfly Series' exhibit ends Monday

THE "BUTTERFLY SERIES," AN exhibit of paintings using butterflies as subject by Gracia de Leon-Imao, has been extended until April 3, Monday.

The one-woman show is open to the public from 8 a.m. to 5 p.m. at the National Telecommunications Commission Building on BIR Road, East Triangle, Diliman, Quezon City.

The artist is the wife of Abdulmalik Imao, who received a Presidential Merit Award for the Arts last June 2005 and was the first Muslim to receive a Ten Outstanding Young Men (TOYM) award in 1968.

Grace, who says her best works of art are her children, is the proud mother of four accomplished artists. Toym is an architect/sculptor, Outstanding Kapampangan awardee in 2004; Joey, a dentist who dab-



bles in painting; Juan Sajid, also a recipient of the TOYM award for sculpture in 2003, and Alkaram, a photographer.

ARTIST Imao with her butterfly painting.

CONTINUED PHOTO

By Tina G. Santos

AGENTS OF THE NATIONAL Bureau of Investigation (NBI) arrested three employees of an unlicensed recruitment agency which allegedly defrauded job applicants of millions of pesos by offering them nonexistent jobs in the United Kingdom and Australia.

NBI officer in charge Nestor Mantaring identified the suspects as Violeta S. de Joya, Leah M. Ibañez and Aileen H. Reye, all employees of Allies Career Development Center/Allies International Internship Program located in Ermita, Manila.

Another suspect, Rosanna de Joya, remains at large.

Processing fees

The suspects allegedly recruited several people, among them complainants Rex Quiban, Garry Hermosilla and Karen de Leon, who were asked to pay processing and placement fees but who failed to get jobs abroad.

The complainants told NBI officials that the suspects had promised them high-paying jobs as hotel workers in the UK and Australia.

The suspects reportedly demanded and received amounts ranging from P28,000 to P147,000, representing processing and placement fees.

The victims added that they were hoping to be deployed in two to eight months as promised by the suspects. But this did not materialize, prompting them to seek NBI assistance.

No license

A verification made with the Philippine Overseas Employment Administration also disclosed that the recruitment agency had no license to recruit workers for overseas employment.

Armed with a search warrant issued by Manila Regional Trial Court Judge Antonio Eugenio, NBI agents conducted a raid last Wednesday, which eventually led to the suspects' arrest.

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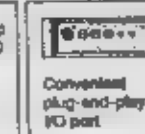
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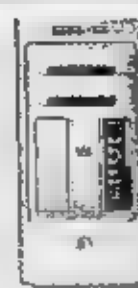
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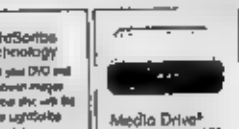
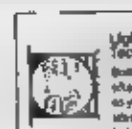


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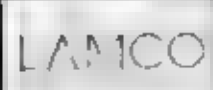
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FRIDAY, MARCH 31, 2006

The World

A11

US cuts off contacts with Hamas-led gov't

WASHINGTON—THE UNITED STATES ORDERED its diplomats and contractors on Wednesday to cut off contacts with Palestinian ministries after a Hamas-led government was sworn in, the State Department said.

At the same time, US President George W. Bush expressed support for the Palestinian people but repeated his position no US funds should go to the Hamas leadership they elected.

"I think that aid should go to suffering Palestinians, but not should it go to a government, however, which has expressed its desire to destroy its neighbor," Bush said during a question-and-answer session after he delivered a speech on Iraq.

Hamas is formally committed to the destruction of Israel and is classed by the US government as a terrorist organization. It won a landslide victory in Palestinian parliamentary elections in January.

"We support the election process, we support democracy, but that doesn't mean we

have to support governments that get elected as a result of democracy," Bush said. "I weep about the suffering of the Palestinians," Bush said, but added the Hamas-led government had to make a choice.

The United States hopes to isolate Hamas and pressure it to recognize Israel, renounce violence and abide by peace accords.

So far, the Islamic militant group has refused, although its leaders have said they would continue to observe a ceasefire with Israel.

A directive, distributed to US diplomats and other officials in the region by e-mail, instructed them with immediate effect not to have contacts with Hamas-appointed government ministers or those who work for them, whether they are members of the group or not, officials said.

"We will not have contact with members of Hamas, no matter what title they may have," said State Department spokesperson Sean McCormack.



BUSH

He said the directive was intended to ensure that US diplomats and officials around

the world knew how to deal with Palestinian officials with whom they might come into contact.

McCormack said the United States would also examine its contacts with the Palestinian Authority and Palestinian diplomats around the world.

The no-contact policy was more sweeping than many had expected because it applies not just to Hamas members but to independents and technocrats in the new government.

The cutoff could affect a wide range of US programs, including security coordination with the Interior Ministry, officials said.

Contacts will still be permitted with President Mahmoud Abbas, his office and non-Hamas members of the Palestinian parliament, officials said.

The policy took effect when Abbas swore in a Hamas government at a ceremony in Gaza. Hamas's 24-member Cabinet is dominated by Hamas loyal-

ists, but includes a few independents.

A US official said independents and technocrats were included in the ban because they were invited to join the government by a Hamas prime minister and took office after a vote of confidence by a Hamas-led parliament.

Officials said the no-contact policy applied to all parts of the US government, as well as to organizations that receive US funding for projects and services in the Palestinian territories.

US law bars the government from providing direct assistance to any group on the State Department's list of terrorist organiza-

Israel has frozen tax revenue transfers to the Palestinian Authority and has banned contacts with Hamas officials but has yet to spell out its policy on lower-level contacts with technocrats. An Israeli official said the issue would be discussed during a Cabinet meeting on Sunday.

Reuters

Olmert plans coalition after Israel vote win

JERUSALEM—ACTING PRIME MINISTER Ehud Olmert prepared Wednesday to form a coalition to fix Israel's final borders after his Kadima party won an election which has dramatically redrawn the political landscape.

With nearly all votes counted, Kadima was poised to emerge the largest party in parliament only four months after its creation by Olmert's coma-stricken mentor Ariel Sharon, although it did not secure enough seats to govern alone.

US President George W. Bush was among those who offered his congratulations but the moderate Palestinian leader Mahmud Abbas responded to the result with a complete rejection of Olmert's plans to act unilaterally.

In a night of upsets which saw strong showings for a number of minor parties after the lowest turnout in Israel's history, the right-wing Likud that has dominated power for three decades was reduced to a humiliating fifth place.

The main headline of both mass circulation dailies trumpeted the "Big Bang" first triggered by Sharon back in November when he bolted Likud to form the centrist Kadima and promptly called an election a year ahead of schedule.

Sharon and then Olmert made clear they would use their next term in office to set the permanent borders of the Jewish state with or without negotiations with the Palestinians.

Olmert's separation plan could ultimately see Israel uproot around 70,000 settlers living in isolated West Bank settlements in an echo of the momentous pullout of the Jews from the Gaza Strip orchestrated by Sharon last year.

In return, Olmert wants to cement control over the big housing blocs which are home to the rest of the quarter of a million Israelis who have settled in the Palestinian territory since occupation began in 1967.

Asi Shariy, a senior official in the prime minister's office, told AFP Kadima had already formed a coalition negotiations team while President Moshe Katsav confirmed he would host a first round of coalition talks Sunday.

In his victory speech, Olmert said he was ready to compromise in the quest for Middle East peace and urged the Palestinians to exercise the same spirit.

AFP

34 dead in fighting at Afghanistan base

KANDAHAR, AFGHANISTAN—US-LED TROOPS battled Taliban rebels who attacked a base in south Afghanistan Wednesday, leaving an American and a Canadian soldier dead along with at least 32 insurgents, officials said.

Coalition forces also destroyed two Taliban headquarters buildings containing weapons and bomb-making material during several hours of fighting in insurgency-hit Helmand province, a coalition statement said.

Militants attacked the coalition base in Sangin district in the early hours of the morning with mortars, rocket-propelled grenades and small arms.

Coalition attack aircraft dropped three 500-pound bombs and two 1,000-pound bombs and also fired high-explosive rockets, guided missiles and incendiary rounds, spokesperson Lieutenant Mike Cody told AFP.

Four coalition troops and an Afghan soldier were wounded in the firefight.

A man who identified himself as representing the Taliban, Yousuf Ahmadi, said Taliban militants had launched the attack.

The coalition said at least 12 insurgents were killed in the initial effort to beat back a "significant enemy element". It later reported a further 20 enemy casualties "as part of an early-morning engagement that continued into daylight hours as coalition forces defeated a large enemy element that was attempting to retreat into sanctuaries," the statement said.

The coalition then discovered large caches of munitions as they overran the Taliban buildings and the insurgents fled, the statement said.

Thirteen US troops have now died in hostile action in Afghanistan this year. The Canadian soldier named as Private Robert Costall was the first from his country to die in combat here in 2006.

AFP

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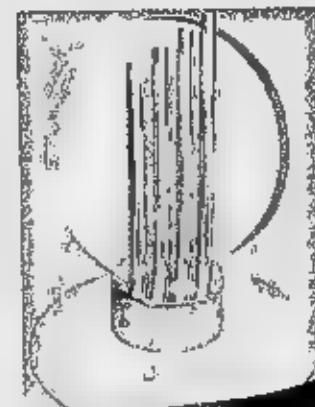
March 31, Friday

RIBBON CUTTING (Mayor Sigfrido Tinga with Mrs. Tinga • Mr. Jose Concepcion III with Mrs. Marissa Concepcion • Ms. Vivienne Tan • Ms. Maricel Laxa) • NATIONAL ANTHEM • INVOCATION • GO NEGOSYO MUSIC VIDEO • FEU GO NEGOSYO DANCERS • OPENING REMARKS (Jose Ma. Concepcion III) • MESSAGE (Gen. Generoso Senga) • BUSINESSMAN MANIC MANAG (Leo Martinez) • INTRODUCTION OF PROGRAM AND INTERACTIVE SESSIONS BY HOST (Cecille Mangalag) • FORUM 1: "MICRONEGOSYO, KAPANGYARIHAN NG KABABAIHAN" (Moderator: Pia Arcangel, Panelists: Myla Villanueva (MDI Group Holdings) • Myrna Yao (National Commission on the Role of Filipino Women) • Chit Juan (Figaro) • Rowena Villegas (Wynsiti) • Karl Tan (Phil. Amalgamated Groceries and Supermarkets Association) • Agnes Car (Women Investors Assoc. of the Phils., Inc.) • MICRONEGOSYO - NOW NAI (Arnel Ignacio) • MAKATANG NONOY: ISANG TULA HANDOG SA KABABAIHAN (Ony Carcamo) • FORUM 2: "PERANG PANG-NEGOSYO, SAAN KA NGA BA TATAKBO?" (Moderator: Cherry Mercado, Panelists: Ma. Corazon Dabao (AFPMBA) • Bert Galvan (GMA Rural Bank of Cavite) • Jessica Barrun (People's Credit and Finance Corporation) • Noel Camacho (Bayan Foundation) • Ma. Teresa Reyes (BPI Family Savings Bank) • Rafael Serrano (First Macro Bank) • Derrick Rasalan (PSBank) • TESTIMONY: "PAGNEGOSYO KASAMA ANG KAPUSO" KAPAMILYA" (Anthony Pangilinan) • TALK: "KALAYAAN SA KAKAPUSAN" (Francisco Colayco) • FORUM 4: "MGA PAGO AT GABAY SA TAGUMPAY" (Moderators: Anna Periquet and Carl Balita of Radyo Negosyo, Panelists: Maol Arroyo (Hybridigm) • Rommel Juan (Binatol Fiesta Foods) • Doyee Tumpalan (First Quadrant) • Ricardo Collantes (Kookal's) • Johnlu Koa (The French Baker) • Sandy Javier (Andok's) • Ronald Pineda (Foided and Hungi)

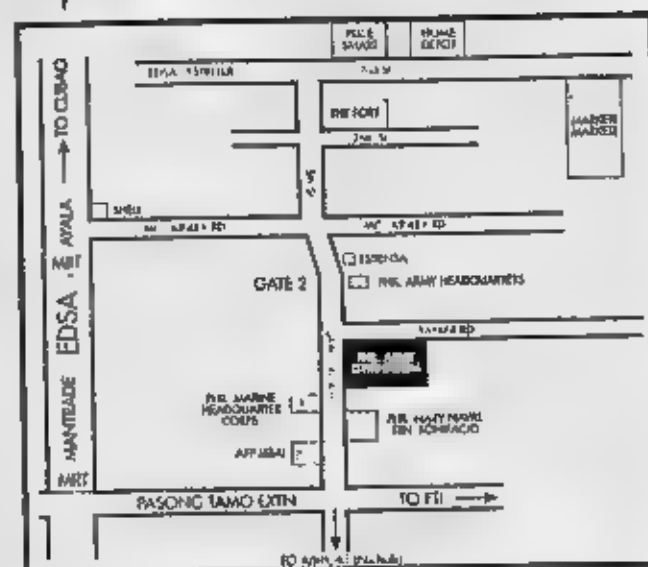
April 1, Saturday

SKILLS DEMO/TRAINING BY LE CORDON BLEU, TESDA-NCR, DOST, TLRC, AND REYES HAIRCUTTERS: POLYRON AND PASTILLAS MAKING (Laura Lazaro • WIAP) • CHOCOLATE CANDY MAKING (Anecila Pablo • TLRC) • PAPER TOLE (Shirley Fabros • Approtech Asia) • REFLEXOLOGY c/o Women Center • MEAT PROCESSING AND DIMSUM MAKING c/o Approtech Asia • COOKING AND FOOD PREPARATION DEMOS • BASIC HAIRCUTTING • WEB DESIGN (Mark Fernandez • TESDA-NCR) • TOMATO-BASED PRODUCTS c/o Approtech Asia • COMPOST TEA BREWER (Capt. James Fros Reamon • ICII) • AUTOCADD (Freddie Estacio • TESDA-NCR) • PRESERVED SAMPALOC AND TEA MAKING (Rita Ricz • WIAP) • CELLPHONE REPAIR c/o Approtech Asia • SESSIONS ON STARTING A BUSINESS, HOW TO START A FRANCHISE BUSINESS c/o Association of Filipino Franchisers, Inc. • "LAKBAY KAINAN, GOLMET PARA SA MASA" (Ludette Dayrit • Le Cordon Bleu) • HOW TO START A FOOD CART BUSINESS c/o Food Cart Association of the Philippines • USAPANG MICRONEGOSYO • HOW TO START A SALON/BARBERSHOP c/o Reyes Haircutters • HOW TO START A HOME SPA BUSINESS (Cathy Brillantes • Turvil • Founding President, Spa Association of the Philippines) • "BIGATIN KA BA SA NEGOSYO?" (Willie Revillame) • BUSINESS MENTORING BOOTH • Mentoring from 11 am to 3 pm c/o Anna Periquet (Anna Marie Home Collection (Philippines), Inc.), Alberto Felix, Jr. (President, Pulp Tech), Lin Deres (Franchise Manager, Goldlocks), Johnny Hilar (President, One Source Part Service, Inc.), Bing Limjoco (Chairman, Philippine Franchise Association), Dante Ang, Jr. (President, Manila Times), Lray Villafuerte (Chairman, Lara's Gifts and Decors), Maret Bautista (Vice President, Follosco Group of Cos.), Mel Alonzo (Chairman, SBCFC), Victor Tan (President, Bobson), Jose Magsaysay (President, Potato Corner), Honor Dimapilis (Faculty, DLSU), Bong Abad (Faculty, DLSU), Jojo Mira (President, Puring Makapuno), Riche Cuna (President, AFFI/Fiorgelato), Rommel Juan (President and CEO, Binatol Fiesta Foods), Rosemarie Lee (President, Memory Magic) and Rene Canias (Consultant, BPO industry) • HANDS-ON BAKING DEMO (HAND-MIXED PINOY PAN DE SAL) AND MICRO-BAKERY BUSINESS MENTORING (Johnlu Koa • The French Baker)

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The WORLD

Editor Luverne B. Gueco

Protesters barricade Thai newspaper

BANGKOK—ABOUT 2,000 PROGOVERNMENT demonstrators gathered outside the headquarters of a Thai media group Thursday, angry over an alleged insult to the country's revered king by one of its newspapers.

Police threw up barricades around the entrance to The Nation Group building on the outskirts of the Thai capital as protest leaders demanded to meet with the writer of an article that allegedly insulted King Bhumibol Adulyadej.

Earlier, the Thai-language Kom Chad Luek daily closed itself down for three days starting Thursday to apologize for misquoting a reference to the monarch by a leader of the movement to oust Prime Minister Thaksin Shinawatra.

The chief editor of the Kom Chad Luek newspaper has also resigned over the incident, said Thepchai Yong, a senior editor of The Nation Group.

Kom Chad Luek had earlier admitted that it failed to print in full a reference to King Bhumibol made by protest leader Sondhi Limthongkul, thus leaving his remarks in a form that might upset the monarch. The report could also open up the newspaper to charges of lese majeste.

"The Kom Chad Luek newspaper is punishing itself for the mistake by stopping to print" for three days, Thepchai told reporters. "The chief editor has already resigned."

Demonstrations for and against Thaksin have been a daily occurrence in the Thai capital over the past few weeks, with the anti-Thaksin groups calling for the king to intervene by appointing an interim prime minister. Both sides pledge their loyalty to the constitutional monarch.

Sondhu and other leaders have accused Thaksin of corruption, abuse of power, election fraud and selling off a national asset to a foreign nation. Thousands of Thai protesters marched on the offices of the country's election commission Thursday demanding the last-minute cancellation of this weekend's polls.

The latest protest in two months of political turmoil followed a Bangkok sit-in overnight that drew around 50,000 people onto the streets calling on Thaksin to step down before Sunday's vote.

"This is a very critical moment. Only people power can force Prime Minister Thaksin to quit," rally leader Chamlong Srimuang told the crowd, which waved banners calling the commission members "political criminals." But support for Chamlong's movement appeared to be waning. He cut short the sit-in at a major Bangkok retail district, which was originally planned to run until Friday, after widespread complaints over the traffic jams it caused. AFP

before Sunday's vote.

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BEAR BRAND, the Philippines' leading milk brand by sales which marks its 30th anniversary in the country this year, successfully launched a nationwide milk education program called "LAKI SA GATAS" recently at the Padre Valerio Malabanan Elementary School in Lipa City, Batangas.

The event was spearheaded by no less than Mayor Vilma Santos much to the delight of the students, teachers and other school authorities in attendance. Aside from Mayor Vi, the event was also graced by executives from Nestlé Philippines, Inc. led by Chairman and CEO Nandu Nandkishore.

Mayor Vi reiterated her message in the now-popular BEAR BRAND television commercial and encouraged the parents present to make their children drink "not just one but two glasses of milk everyday." She also urged mothers not to compromise their children's health as their number one priority, especially in difficult times. The mayor noted that the cost of two glasses of milk a day is only P13.00, a very good investment in their children's physical and mental development, as well as present and future health.

LAKI SA GATAS is an initiative that aims to promote, primarily among mothers, the nutritional importance of milk and the value of drinking at least two glasses a day for children 4-8 years old, based on nutrients found in milk and the make-up of the average diet. It will visit 800 schools in Luzon, Visayas and Mindanao, and will target some 400,000 children and 250,000 mothers with learning sessions for both that will be beneficial and interesting. The sessions feature a presentation by a certified nutritionist for mothers on key nutrition facts on milk, educational games for children, and other activities stressing the benefits of milk and of drinking two glasses a day. The bulk of the school visits will be conducted from June to December this year.

The program is in response to the declining milk consumption in the country which has dropped from 21 to 18 liters per capita annually in the last five years. In 2005, total consumption of powdered milk, the bulk of milk consumed locally, decreased by 7% from 2004. This means that at current levels, Filipinos, including children, on the average are drinking less than one glass of milk each day.

Children who do not drink milk are being deprived of an important food that can help maximize their growth, development and health, all the way into adulthood. Milk is the single best food that can help children grow physically and mentally, with carbohydrates, proteins, vitamins and minerals — particularly calcium for strong bones and teeth — nearly all the basic nutrients that a growing child needs.

For this reason, Nestlé, with its global knowledge on milk and nutrition, and BEAR BRAND, as the country's leading milk, are embarking on LAKI SA GATAS to promote health through milk education.



LOST KINGDOM

The central palace complex from a 3,200-year-old settlement on the island of Salamis, near Athens, Greece, is shown in an undated handout picture provided by excavator Yiannis Lolos. Lolos believes he has found the seat of the mythical King Ajax of Salamis, one of the heroes of the Trojan War. The hilltop site overlooks a small natural harbor. AP

UN-backed tribunal set to try Taylor

FREETOWN, SIERRA LEONE—LIBERIA'S one-time warlord Charles Taylor was in the hands of Sierra Leone's tribunal Thursday, where he is set to become the first-ever African head of state tried on war crimes charges by an international court.

Taylor has been indicted by the UN-backed tribunal on 11 counts of crimes against humanity stemming from his support for brutal rebels in Sierra Leone. His arrival in handcuffs at the court Wednesday represented a watershed moment for West Africa, a region long shaken by Taylor's war-making.

"Today is a momentous occasion, an important day for international justice, the international community, and above all the people of Sierra Leone," said Desmond de Silva, chief prosecutor of the tribunal called the Special Court.

"His presence in the custody of the Special Court sends out the clear message that no matter how rich, powerful or feared people may be, the law is above them," De Silva said.

Nigerian police captured the exiled ex-Liberian president late Tuesday as he tried to leave Nigeria, where he has lived in the south since stepping down from power during a 2003 rebel attack. He was caught trying to slip across the northern Nigerian border with Cameroon with his son, an aide-de-camp and a local guide, along with two 50-kg sacks filled with US dollars and euros, Nigerian police official Alhaji Mohammed Aminu Beilo said.

UN peacekeepers ferried Taylor by helicopter to the court, where de Silva said he was read his arrest warrant and would make his first court appearance by the end of this week.

Taylor joined nine other defendants, also charged with crimes committed during Sierra Leone's brutal 1989-2002 civil war. Taylor, a bombastic speechmaker during his time in the bush and as Liberia's president, made no comment.

The charges against Taylor stem from his support of the Revolutionary United Front rebels that terrorized civilians in Sierra Leone for years, chopping off the arms, legs, ears and lips of their victims.

On March 3, 2003, Taylor was indicted on 17 counts alleging war crimes, crimes against humanity and other serious violations of international humanitarian law for backing the rebels during the war. De Silva said that on March 16, 2006, the judge of the Special Court approved an amended indictment of 11 counts, which he said "will ensure a more focused trial."

The court began trials in 2004, but Taylor was their highest-profile defendant and the first African head of state to face trial on war-crimes charges.

Nigerian police said they found him in a vehicle with diplomatic plates. He was wearing a safari suit and was in possession of sacksful of dollars and euros, they said. His journey to the UN court then went through several African countries, after Nigeria deported him to his native Liberia, which handed him over for extradition to Sierra Leone. AP



SPORTS

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Pacman-Larios tickets cost as high as \$1,000

By Salven L. Lagumbay
Contributor

BOXING STAR MANNY PACQUIAO says he wants his next fight to be held in the country as a tribute to his countrymen.

However, based on fans' reaction to what they called as 'expensive' tickets, it seems the July 2 fight at the Araneta Coliseum isn't really for the masses.

But before fans start lynching Pacquiao for the prohibitive cost of the tickets for his upcoming duel with Oscar Larios, trainer Freddie Roach said yesterday Manny had no say in the issue during an interview with a popular boxing website.

Roach told Boxingtalk's Brad Cooney that ABS-CBN, which



PACQUIAO

owns the exclusive right to the fight coverage, has decided on the ticket prices based on the results of its research.

"Well, they just had the WWE

(World Wrestling Entertainment) over there, and the place was sold out...ABS researched it, and they have done entertainment stuff before, and they say they know what they are doing, so it's out of our hands. ABS says they are in control, and they say that this fight will sell out within a week," Roach told Boxingtalk.

Early reports said ticket prices for the fight would cost \$1,000 (roughly P51,000) for the so-called "corporate seats" while ringside tickets could cost P25,000 and P1,000 for the bleachers.

Roach added that ABS-CBN will do the local coverage for the fight, while HBO will pick up the pay-per-view feed for the American, Latino, and Filipino viewers in the United States.

Organizers plan to sell some 17,000 tickets, while the rest of the seats will be reserved for VIP's and other non-paying boxing aficionados.

Roach also defended the choice of Larios as Pacquiao's opponent, citing that the Mexican "is a tough guy, a live opponent and ex-world champion," who was approved by HBO and is not an easy opponent by any means.

Roach was reacting to reports that portrayed Larios as an easy foe for Pacquiao.

He added that if Pacquiao gets by Larios, and if Erik Morales insists on fighting at a catch weight beyond 130 lb, then they would be forced to accept Barrera's dare of a Nov. 4 showdown.

WHAT'S INSIDE

BAP defers filing arbitration case versus POC /A35

Sharapova gains semifinals /A37



Painters down Sparks, secure tie for top spot

By Jasmine W. Payo

RAIN OR SHINE'S TALL FRONT-court put up another dominant display in a 73-67 victory over Toyota Otis that gave the Elasto Painters a share of the lead in the PBL Unity Cup yesterday at the San Andres Gym.

Jay R. Reyes and Marvin Ortiguerra combined for 29 points even as 6-foot-10 rookie Sammie Eman made his presence felt on both ends of the court in the final stretch.

"We won over Toyota the hard way," said coach Leo Austria after the Elasto Painters joined Montaña on top at 2-0. "The players were inspired and motivated with the arrival of Eman, but Reyes also stepped up."

Earlier, Jason Castro reprised his lead role as Hapee-PCU forged a 68-63 win over Harbour Centre.

Coming off a 25-point performance, Castro shot 21 points, including two crucial baskets in the final two minutes, to boost the Teethmasters to their first win.

But coach Junel Baculi said the Teethmasters still have a lot of work to do.

"We're still groping for form," said Baculi. "But kudos goes to Robert Sanz, Jason and Gabby (Espinas)."

Hapee-PCU, Toyota Otis, Magnolia and Granny Goose wound up tied at 1-1, while Harbour Centre and TeleTech remained

winless in two games.

Back-to-back baskets from Jojo Tangkay, last conference's Most Valuable Player, sparked a 14-2 rally in the final period that gave the Painters a 63-57 lead from 49-55.

The Painters remained on top for good at 67-63 behind Ortiguerra and Eman, a 24-year-old

standout from the University of Mindanao who joined the Painters only three days ago.

Toyota Otis' Fil-Am sensation Joe Devance shot a game-high 17 points on top of 10 rebounds.

The scores:

First Game
Hapee PCU 68—Castro 21, Belga 12, Sanz 10, Nailon 5, Moreno 4, Espinas 4, Guevarra 4, Gonzales 3, Baculi 3, Solis 2, Razon 0, Canlas 0
HARBOUR CENTRE 63—Chia 10, Yeo 9, Tenorio 8, Araña 8, Alonzo 7, Reyes 7, Maierhofer 6, Gaco 4, Gamboa 4, Palerno 4, Coching 3, Sagundel 0, Lanete 0, Mesina 0

Quarters: 18-23, 35-33, 52-49, 65-63
Second Game
RAIN OR SHINE 73—Reyes 16, Ortiguerra 13, Tangkay 11, Eman 8, Enrile 7, Tan 6, Masabanan 4, Cabate 4, Orbeta 2, Sagad 2, Sta. Maria 0

TOYOTA OTIS 67—Devance 17, Aldave 14, Bautista 6, Daa 6, Andaya 4, Rodriguez 4, Aban 4, Coronel 4, Casio 3, Fajardo 3, Larong 2, Cabahug 0, Baleyot 0

Quarters: 17-16, 34-31, 49-53, 73-67

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Bulls, Giants renew rivalry

GAMES TODAY (Cuneta Astrodome)
4:40 p.m.—Coca-Cola vs Barangay Ginebra
7:35 p.m.—Purefoods vs Red Bull

NO TROPHY IS AT STAKE BUT A LOT OF pride will be on the line when Red Bull and Purefoods clash today in the Gran Matador Brandy-PBA Philippine Cup at the Cuneta Astrodome.

The 7:35 p.m. contest marks their first meeting since the Bulls downed the Giants in their best-of-seven series for the championship of the import-laced Fiesta Conference recently.

"That loss to Red Bull pricked the pride of my players," said Purefoods coach Ryan Gregorio following the Giants' victory over the Alaska Aces that put them in a share of second place (3-2) with the San Miguel Beermen and the Bulls. "But the good thing about it is I don't need extra motivation to push my players. They are already motivated."

Barangay Ginebra will definitely need loads of motivation when the slumping Kings meet league-leader Coca-Cola Tigers in the earlier match at 4:40 p.m.

The Gin Kings have lost three in a row after winning their first two outings with Eric Menk still to regain top form after an ankle sprain and Jayjay Helterbrand and Marc Caguioa struggling with their run-

ning game.

Though the law of averages has caught up with the Tigers, they could exploit the problems that have been bugging the Gin Kings for quite some time now.

The Tigers are also expected to play with renewed fire after taking a drubbing from the Talk 'N Text Phone Pals that ended their winning streak at four games.

Red Bull is one of the teams threatening to dislodge the Tigers and the way the Bulls have been blasting the opposition is a cause for worry for the Giants.

"We just have to maintain our energy level," said Guiao after the Bulls beat the Air21 Express the other night as Lordy Tugade fired 13 of his 17 points in the final period.

June Navarro

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SPORTS

A34

Dumandan storms ahead in DHL Open

By Musong R. Castillo

CANLUBANG, LAGUNA—MARVIN Dumandan whipped up a storm during a calm third round yesterday, shooting a 6-under-par 66 as the DHL-WWE Express Amateur Open toasted a new leader for the third straight day at Cangolf North here.

Dumandan fired at pins with reckless abandon and got rewarded for it, gunning down seven birdies after opening up with par and his only bogey to total 213 after 54 holes and take a two-shot lead over Singaporean ace Quincy Quek.

The 18-year-old Quek, whose demeanor on the course is nothing short of a pro's, continued to improve after shooting an opening 73 on Tuesday, carding 70 this time for 215, three ahead of solo third-placer Ronnie Torrecampo, who signed for a 73.

Former winner Jun Bernis re-

turned a level 72 and got back into the thick of the fight after skying to a 78 on Wednesday, leading Michael Bibat and National Cadet's Open program standout Mark Fernando in joint fourth with 219 aggregates.

Bibat, the former Singapore Amateur winner, and Fernando, who had a piece of the lead along with Quek and Torrecampo after 36 holes, both submitted 74s with Rufino Bayron alone in seventh spot at 220 after a 72.

Joseph Labajo, the fifth man in the crowded lead after Wednesday, struggled with a 76 to join Jay Bayron and Anthony Fernando in eighth place with 221 aggregates. Jay, the older brother of Rufino, shot 75 and Fernando a 72.

In the women's side, junior standout Bambee Revilla submitted a 74 to put herself in position towards a breakthrough win in an

Open tournament.

Counting her first round 77 on Wednesday, Revilla now has a four-shot lead over reigning RP Ladies' champ Debbie De Villa, who shot a 77, and Lara Roberto, who fired a 76, for 155.

Revilla, also 15 like De Villa, actually had two double bogeys, but battled back with a total of four birdies.

"My putting clicked," Dumandan said in Filipino. "I felt like I could make every putt I took. I was so confident that the holes were as big as buckets out there."

"I also played with a lot of luck, yesterday being my wife's birthday." While Dumandan was having a heyday, Quek struggled despite posting the only other sub-par score for the day.

Quek birdied 12 and 13 and then eagled the 14th. He was threatening to take the lead until a double bogey 6 on the 18th did him in.



DUMANDAN surges ahead with 6-under-par 66.

De La Salle, SBC prevail

DE LA SALLE AND SAN BEDA College got off to fiery starts in both the alumni and high school divisions of the Total-Filoli-Flying-V Homegrown Cup inaugurals at the San Juan gym.

The La Salle All-Stars, behind ex-PBA players Tony Boy Espinosa and Alvin Magpantay, turned back their Letran counterparts, 72-65, while the SBC Red Lions stunned the Ateneo Blue Eagles, 88-77.

In high school openers, the Greenies made it a double for DLSU, edging the Squires, 68-65, while the Red Cubs shot down the Eagles, 73-65.

The tournament is sponsored by Globe and Shell and supported by Sunbolt, Immuvik, Accel, Gerry's Grill, Bank of Commerce, Banco de Oro, Security Bank, X-24, PBCOM, Millennium Plans and Solar Sports.

Orchard, Riviera bets win

LIPA, BATANGAS—WOLEN Superal closed with an even-par 72 that gave Orchard the needed lift to clinch the Division I championship in the Jungolf Interclub 2006, the opening leg of the Samsung Summer Circuit, at the Mt. Malarayat Golf and Country Club here.

Superal, a world jungolf champion who took a six-month break from the game after a hip surgery, proved that he was back for good with a stirring effort that rubbed on to sister Crystal (75) and Nico Sevilla (76) for an Orchard title romp.

Orchard totaled 223 for the day and a 54-hole aggregate of 690, 12 strokes better than the 702 of Agumaldo which made 233. Riviera

placed third with a 242-713.

Riviera ruled the two other divisions of the tourney which has Samsung and Philippine Airlines as main sponsors. The other sponsors are DHL, Callaway, Titleist, Mizuno, La Jolla, Taylor Made, Wilson, Ping, MOGI Air Liquid, Auto Magic, Inquirer Golf and Michael Guy.

Maan Legaspi shot a 75, Miggy Yee added a 77 and AR Ramos had an 80 as Riviera I streaked to a 22-stroke triumph in Division II.

The Riverians, who bucked an 82 by fourth player Tonton Arevalo, finished with a 706 total, far ahead of Royal Northwoods, who had 242-738, and Agumaldo (247-756).

In the Division III competitions played at the Riviera executive

course, Abby Arevalo, Mia Legaspi, Tommy Agojo and Ma. Elena Quaoit powered Riviera to a 13-stroke win over Valley.

The circuit moves to Camp John Hay course for the second leg on April 5-7. Players must register with the Jungolf office at 893-95-99.

Superal also took the individual plum in Class B while sisters Crystal and Princess topped girls Class A and Class D, respectively.

Other boys titlists were Lee Dong Geun in Class A, Bino dela Paz in Class C, RJ Talud in Class D, Justin Dy in Class E and Tommy Agojo in Class F. Other girls winners were Beverly Mendoza (Class B), Maan Legaspi (Class C), Abby Arevalo (Class E) and Chloe Reyes (Class F).

Iloilo cagers makes NBC debut

ILOILO CITY—THE ILOILO CITY Warriors, now backed by Mayor Jerry Trenas, make their southern division debut in the 2006 NBC national basketball championship today when they host expansion team North Cotabato at the University of San Agustin gym here.

The Warriors hope to make a big impact now that Mayor Trenas and the city government have backed them up. But Gov. Manny Pinal's

Braves are determined to spoil Iloilo's debut in the 6 p.m. match.

The Braves, who beat Valencia, 80-74, recently are shooting for their second win in three games against the Warriors, who are supported by the Iloilo Basketball League led by Snook Divunagracia.

New Iloilo coach Rodolfo Moles Medez pins his hopes on Elben Leonida and Eldrin Senerez. Backing up the duo are Edgar Castro,

Mark Unarce, Elio Antenor-Cruz, Loreto Bautista Jr., Allen Sucadito, Edward Ogunsay, Gerard Ganzon, Emil Villanueva, Julius Jalpa, Densel Sina-on, Paul Ian Poral, Lol Lima and Henry Sencil.

Thirteen teams are vying in the tourney sponsored by Panasonic, Sulpicio Lines, Nature's Spring Mineral Water, Spring Cooking Oil, Regent Foods, Firefly Lightings, Molten and Prime Channel.

Freedom Camp set

REGISTRATION FOR the Levi's Engineered Jeans Freedom Camp on April 1 and 2, at the Market Market, the Port in Taguig.

Those within the 15-25 age bracket, can join any—or all five camp activities—freestyle basketball, freestyle football, free climbing, zipping and freestyle dance. Participation is free.

A total of P100,000 are also up for grabs in the group freestyle dance competition.

Aside from cash prizes, 1st prize winners in each event will receive gift certificates from Levi's and other sponsors: Levi's Eyewear, Levi's Timing, Mizuno, And 1, and Snickers Chocolate Bar.

Register at selected Levi's stores or get the form by e-mail, text REG LEJ your e-mail address and send to 0917-8566323. Call the Levi's Freedom Camp Hotline at 894-5425 or 813-5283.

Clark hosts Quartermile

THE 2ND LEG OF THE

Racing Championship Series will be held this Saturday at Omni Aviation inside Clark Special Economic Zone in Pampanga. Drag race enthusiasts from Pampanga, Tarlac, Baguio, Cabanatuan, Pangasinan, Bulacan, Dagupan, Subic and Manila are expected to join. Registration starts at 3 p.m. The event is organized by Road-wise Motoring Foundation in cooperation with Kotse.co and Tech & Tuner Magazine. For inquiries, call or text Liza at 0916-3121050.



HONEY Gladys Moreno (white) of Xavier University tries to keep ball in play against Noelyne Dalman of Capitol University.

Capitol University gains semis

CAPITOL UNIVERSITY OF CAGAYAN DE ORO, a first-timer in the Nestea Beach Volley Championships, yesterday stunned University of Mindanao Tagum, 25-19, to reach the semifinals of this sizzling summer event scheduled in Boracay from May 4-6.

Rolex Cubillas and Jose Carlos Cagadas of Capitol, long-time partners in indoor volleyball but first-timers in beach volleyball, regaled the crowd at the La Salle Greenhills sand court as they eliminated the taller UMT pair of Lowell Fabian and Johnny Macula.

Capitol U lost its first match of the day to University of Mindanao Davao, 25-21, then bounced back with a 25-14 win over Holy Cross of Davao College to set up the do-or-die match with UMT, which defeated Misamis U, 25-7, before losing to Mindanao State U, 25-23.

Other Mindanao teams advancing to the Boracay semis are Ateneo de Davao, UMD and MSU in the men's division, and MSU, UMD, UMT and HCDC in the women's side.

Ateneo de Davao advanced with a 25-9 win over University of Immaculate Conception, UMD with a 25-23 win over Asevo earlier in the day, and MSU with a 25-23 win over UMT in the morning matches.

In the women's side, MSU clinched a ticket to Boracay with a 25-10 victory over Capitol U, UMD with a previous 25-6 win over MSU, UMT with a 25-11 decision over Mahardika Institute of Technology, and HCDC with a 25-22 triumph over UMT.

Representing Luzon in Boracay are defending champion St. Benilde, FEU, Adamson and St. Francis in the men's side, and St. Benilde, Letran, Adamson and University of Baguio in the women's division.

From the Visayas, making it to the next round were Foundation, University of San Jose Recoletos, University of San Carlos and University of Negros Occ. Recoletos for the men's, and USJR, University of Visayas, University of San Agustin and University of Southern Philippines for the women's.

Paragua tackles 50 CAR players

GRANDMASTER MARK PARAGUA WILL challenge leading CAR players in a 50-board simultaneous exhibition on April 7 at 2 p.m. at the Baguio Country Club in Baguio City.

Paragua's exhibition will precede the 2006 Cordillera Under-18 Chess Tournament on April 8 to 9 at the Cordillera Chess Center in Km3 Brgy. Balili in La Trinidad, Benguet.

The event is organized by former Benguet governor and National Chess Federation of the Philippines (NCFP) director Raul Molintas under the auspices of NCFP President and Surigao del Sur Rep. Prospero "Butch" Pichay.

Players must register with Rocky Molintas at (0918) 948-1080 or visit the Cordillera Chess Center. Registration deadline is on April 6 at 5 p.m.

Meanwhile, Paragua exchanged marriage vows with Christine Dacayo of Quezon City yesterday at 4 p.m. at the Divine Trust in Meycauayan, Bulacan.

Representative Pichay, Bulacan Gov. Jose Dela Cruz, Pilway Marketings Inc. CEO/President Hector "Chito" Tagaysay and engineer Albert "Ka Bito" Cruz stood as sponsors. NM Marlon Bernardino.

17th World Junior Tennis Championships

FIL-AMERICAN Denise Dy hopes to make an impressive performance before her countrymen in the ongoing Mitsubishi Lancer International Juniors Tennis Championships at the Rizal Memorial Tennis Center. This, after she was eliminated in the first round of last year's edition together with four other local wild cards. "This is a tough tournament and everyone wants to win. I don't want to disappoint people. I will work hard no matter what," said the fifth-seeded Dy, who is ranked No. 59 in the International Tennis Federation (ITF) roster of juniors.

The US-born and raised Dy boosted her title chances this year after posting a 6-3, 6-1 quarterfinal victory over No. 19 Varatchai Wongteanchai of Thailand, a win which gave the Filipino a 3-0 record against the world No. 97 Thai.

"I'm happy with the way I'm playing right now and I want to win this tournament," said Dy, who won the singles and doubles titles in the Phinma ITF Juniors last year at the Manila Polo Club.

Girls top seed Sacha Jones looks forward to a championship in the ongoing tournament, which she is participating in for the first time. But the Auckland-born netter doesn't want to be overconfident. She is just optimistic. "Everyone's goal here is to win the title. I also want to win but I don't want to think about the title yet. I just want to take it one match at a time," said the 17-year-old Jones, ranked No. 32 in the world juniors.

An all-around player who is an aggressive baseliner, Jones reached the quarterfinals following a 6-3, 7-5 win over No. 13 Elena Chernyakova of Russia yesterday.

Jones, who reached the second round of this year's Australian Open Juniors, eyes a rematch with second seed Khrystyna Antonychuk of Ukraine, who beat the New Zealander 6-3, 6-2, in the semifinals of the Bangkok ITF event last week.

"It will be an interesting match. I want to meet her again," said Jones, who defeated Antonychuk, 6-2, 6-3 in the Malaysia ITF Juniors final two weeks ago for her fifth title overall.



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Columbia
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Drag racing series starts April 8

THE 2006 RED HORSE-PCSO NATIONAL Drag Racing Championship Series unwraps April 8 at the country's first permanent safe track—the Drag Strip of the Batangas Racing Circuit.

Drag Racing Driver of the Year Leo Joel Cordero hopes to keep his reign against some 60 drivers expected to compete in this event sponsored by Red

Home Beer, Philippine Charity Sweepstakes Office and supported by Pilipinas Shell, Denso, Casino Filipino and Sparco.

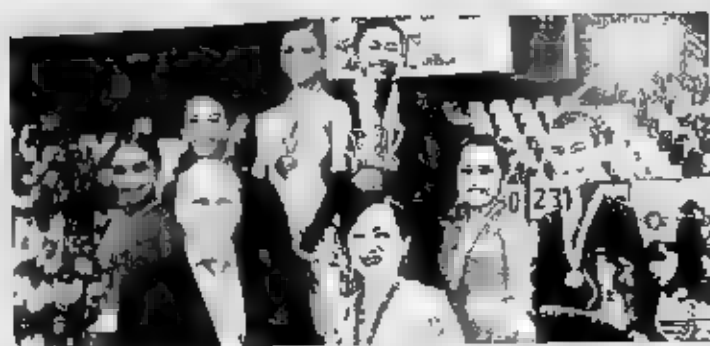
But the bigger challenge for the competing drivers is breaking the existing fastest record of 11.833 seconds set by Blanche Racing's Dave Jona.

"The track design of the country's first permanent track added beauty to the

successful staging of the 2005 season," said BRC drag racing director Fil Gulfin. "We're expecting more drivers to come and stake their pride in beating the record time."

For details, contact the Batangas Racing Circuit c/o BRC Manager Sherwin Mojica or Nelson Gayola at (632) 817-2241, 729-5365 or fax 815-1241.

BAP defers filing arbitration case vs POC



LATIN DANCE WINNERS: Winners of the recent Dance Sport Council of the Philippines Junior Grade A Latin competition with DSCP director Nanette Mendoza (right, front row) and German adjudicator Dr. Thomas Kolbott. The winners are Jefferson Pimentel and Daine Xylenne Balili, first; Junil Bacalso and Virganie Oyao, second; and Kevin Minoza and Rodah Mae Fernandez, third.

By Jasnuwe W. Payo

SAVING IT'S AN "ORGANIZATIONAL MOVE," the Basketball Association of the Philippines yesterday deferred filing a case against the Philippine Olympic Committee at the Court of Arbitration for Sport (CAS) in Lausanne, Switzerland.

BAP president Joey Lina said he has decided to wait for the outcome of the meeting between POC president Jose "Peping" Cojuangco and world basketball federation (Fiba) secretary general Patrick Baumann on April 4.

"Everything is ready but we have decided to wait for (the results of) their meeting," said Lina. "It's an organizational move. We do not want to speculate. We'll just think about it later and refer the case (based) on the outcome of their meeting."

Lina added that the BAP has already tapped a Swiss-based lawyer.

Led by Cojuangco, several POC officials and representatives of the country's four major bas-

ketball stakeholders will meet with Baumann on April 4 in Seoul, South Korea.

Although the by-laws and constitution of Pilipinas Basketball has already been sent to the Fiba headquarters in Switzerland, Cojuangco decided to take the opportunity to personally inform Baumann that the new cage body designed to replace the BAP is backed by four of the five stakeholders—the PBA, PBL, UAAP and NCAA.

Lina, the fifth stakeholder, quit the group when the four stakeholders picked Pilipinas Basketball as the name of the new cage body.

Saying that the BAP had "exhausted all avenues," Lina announced in a press conference recently that the BAP will seek readmission to the POC by elevating the case to the CAS this month.

"As found out by Fiba, our expulsion is illegal and inappropriate," said Lina.

The CAS is an international institution that settles sports-related disputes. Created in 1984, it is independent of any sports organization and has nearly 300 arbitrators from 87 countries.

Sports keeps youth away from drugs

IT IS THE TIME OF THE YEAR WHEN THE country's students are on vacation and various sporting activities such as basketball, swimming, chess, badminton, taekwondo and running proliferate during the summer months.

CLEAN LIVING



Manolo R. Inigo

Aimed chiefly at getting the young people into sports and keeping them away from drugs and other bad habits, three of the more popular summer programs are the Milo BEST Center Basketball Clinic, the Bert Lozada Swimming School and the Checkmate

chess classes.

BEST Center is only one of several summer projects supported by Milo as a corporate commitment. The others include the annual Milo Marathon, Checkmate and clinics in taekwondo, gymnastics, badminton, golf, football, karatedo, volleyball, bowling, squash, table tennis and fencing.

Founded in 1978 by Nic Jorge, a former varsity player of the University of the Philippines Maroons and national team coach (he mentored the Philippine team that placed eighth in the World Basketball Championship hosted by the country in 1978 and at age 36 the youngest Filipino coach in the world cagefest in memory), BEST Center is the oldest among the various cage camps in the country today. It is also the first to teach the fundamentals of the dash-and-dribble game through a scientific and systematic approach.

Many of its products have learned to play basketball the proper way. In fact, some of them used their BEST Center experience as a ladder to success, among them two-time PBA Most Valuable Player Benjie Paras, PBA Coach of the Year Perry Ronquillo, defense specialist Jerry Codinera, who is now calling the shots for newcomer Teirech in the PBL, PBA Rookie of the Year Jun Limpot and Boybits Victoria, PBA players Paolo Mendoza, Ray Evangelista, Patrick Fran and Poch Juinio.

Because of its mass appeal, BEST clinics are now being held all over the country from as far as Davao City in the south and Ilocos Sur in the north. San Pablo City will also host a BEST clinic on May 22-27 under the auspices of youthful BJ Cuello (tels. 049-2465377, 049-8003015 and 0921-5714355).

During the weeklong sessions, the young participants are taught not only the basics of basketball, but also sound values such as discipline, sportsmanship and camaraderie. They are also taught to respect their elders and obey their coaches, priceless lessons they will carry through their adult life.

On the other hand, the Bert Lozada Swim School (BLSS) not only teaches the students how to swim, but also (the adults especially) how to overcome their fear of water, improve their stamina and help them lose excess weight through its Confidence Booster Program (CBP).

CBP is the answer to those people who grew up not learning how to swim. It is noted that while many parents enroll their children in swimming classes, they themselves don't even try to learn how to float, reluctant to take the plunge. This program teaches them how to conquer their phobia and feel comfortable in the water. There will be month-long classes to be conducted in May (venue and exact dates to be announced later) combining dry land sessions and in-pool exercises aimed at gradually strengthening a student's confidence.

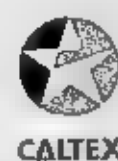
In chess, there is the pioneering Checkmate classes founded by Mila Emperado in 1990. Among its most prominent product is grandmaster Mark Paragua, now rated as the country's No. 1 player by Fide (world chess federation). Based in Bulacan, Paragua lives in the town of Marilao, where a fun run under the aegis of Barangay Tabing-Ilog chair Juanito Dumacali and executive officer Dionisio San Pablo will be held the Sunday after the Holy Week.

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What Drives You



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Nets cruise to 10th straight victory



TEACH 'EM YOUNG: The Milo BEST Center, founded by Nic Jorje, has produced many graduates who have gone on to play in the PBA. For inquiries, call 914-7111 or Marilyn and Monica Jorje at 411-6260 or 372-3066 or telefax 672-3065.

NEW YORK—RICHARD JEFFERSON scored 27 points to guide the streaking New Jersey Nets to their 10th straight win with an 86-74 victory over the Memphis Grizzlies on Wednesday.

Vince Carter added 23 points as the Nets equaled their season-high consecutive win streak.

New Jersey (42-28) were on top for most of the night, leading by as many as 23 points in the third quarter, on their way to winning for the 20th time in 23 home games.

Jason Kidd dished off 12 assists for the Nets, along with five points and five rebounds, to help New Jersey take a 50-31 lead at the half.

New Jersey has been impressive during the 10-game streak, winning seven by double-digits and three against powerhouses Dallas, Phoenix and Detroit.

Pau Gasol had 21 points and eight rebounds for the Grizzlies, while Bobby Jackson added 18 points in 26 minutes off the bench.

It was the third lowest point total of the season for the Grizzlies, who had won six of their previous seven coming in.

In Cleveland, LeBron James scored 46 points as the Cavaliers beat the Dallas Mavericks, 107-94. Zydrunas Ilgauskas scored 13 points for the Cavaliers.

In Atlanta, Al Harrington scored 23 points as the Hawks edged the Indiana Pacers, 94-93. Zaza Pachulia scored 17 points for the Hawks.

In Toronto, Dwyane Wade scored 37 points as the Miami Heat rallied to beat the Raptors, 98-94. Antoine Walker scored 18 points and had 10 rebounds, while Udonis Haslem added 15

points and had 13 rebounds for the Heat.

In New York, Paul Pierce and Wally Szczerbiak both scored 22 points as the Boston Celtics beat the New York Knicks, 123-98.

In Philadelphia, Chauncey Billups and Antonio McDyess both scored 18 points as the Detroit Pistons beat the 76ers, 101-91.

In Minneapolis, Kevin Garnett scored 27 points and had 19 rebounds as the Minnesota Timberwolves beat the Orlando Magic, 103-91.

In Houston, Yao Ming scored 29 points and had 10 rebounds as the Rockets beat the Seattle SuperSonics, 115-87.

SOLAR Sports will air the San Antonio-LA Lakers tussle at 11:30 a.m. today with a replay at 8 p.m. Reuters



TRAIL Blazers' Zach Randolph

Former UE cager dies

CARLOS F. QUITZON, a former University of the East Warrior popularly known as Bobby, peacefully passed away in Calgary, Alberta, Canada, recently at the age of 67. He left a wife, Erlinda, and two children, namely, Robert (Bobby) Jr. and married daughter Karen. Bobby Quitzon graduated with a degree in Commerce, major in banking. He played for the UE Warriors for four years when the Warriors won three UAAP titles. Some of his teammates were Olympians Jimmy Manano and Floehl Nadurata, as well as Norman De Vera and the late Rivaldo Pabilione. Bobby is one of the finest and best shooters who donned the Red Warriors jersey. He worked and played in the commercial league with Peoples Bank and with the Centrai Bank of the Philippines.

SM wushu

THERE will be a two-day wushu mini-tournament and demonstration this weekend (April 1-2) at SM Manila. The event kicks off a busy summer schedule not only for wushu enthusiasts but also for taekwondo and football fans at the SM chain of malls. Wushu will be held in 11 of 22 SM branches nationwide. Taekwondo is slated in 18 of the 22 shops while football will be played in 14 of its outlets, according to the organizing IMG. Taekwondo will hold its competitions on April 3-4 at SM North Edsa before SM Sucat hosts a tournament on April 5-6.

Gals bigger

THE GIRLS Athletic League (GALS), one of the country's most popular all-girls inter-school athletic tournaments, feted its sponsors led by Reva of Jnisport Italia and supporters BPI Jumpstart, Toby's Sports, Pizza Hut, Snickers, Chowking and Enderun Colleges at the La Salle Greenhills recently.

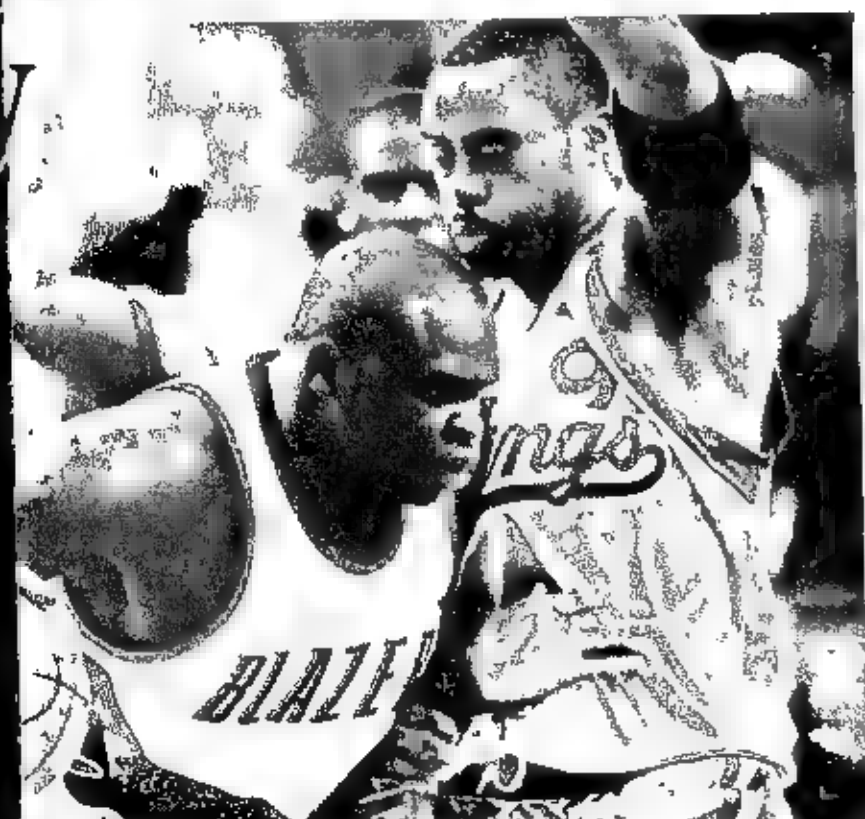


BY TOP CHOICE

- Race 1—(Or/Tri)—From This Moment (2), Golden Horn (5), Dana Rose/Santiago (4), Guadalupe (1).
- Race 2—(Or/Tri)—Screaming Eagle (2), Wine and Roses (1), El Love Sandra (5), Dandelion/Carbo's Fancy (3).
- Race 3—(Tri)—Born Perfect (3), Danielle's Angel (4), Ron Daring Fly (5).
- Race 4—(Or/Tri)—Hello Africa (7), St. Jak Jak (2), Secret Angel (1), Hale and Hearty (6).
- Race 5—(Quart/Tri)—Virgin Island (2), Southern Prince (5), Imperator (1), Chateaus (2).
- Race 6—(Or/Tri)—Mary Jane Bomb (2), Fancy Dancer (5), Museo Duost (6), Imperator (1).
- Race 7—(Penta/Or/Tri)—Babing Silver (2), Mr. Lucas (5), Yao Man (3), Alm and Fine (6), Makati Haven (6).
- Race 8—(Or/Tri)—Western Dancer (1), Cool Turner (3), Ravishing Rally (6), Fair Ordeal/Red Hot Water (5).
- Race 9—(Super Or/Tri)—Sizzling Bullet (2), Cool Town (11), Odyssey (2), Earth Wind And Fire (3), Key Element (5), Luck of the Irish (6).



Government
Cigarette smoking is da



ph (left) tries to drive past Kings' Kenny Thomas.

Sharapova gains semis

MIAMI—MARIA SHARAPOVA POWERED INTO her fifth semifinal in as many events this season with a 6-3 6-3 defeat of Russian rival Anastasia Myskina at the Nasdaq-100 Open on Wednesday.

The fourth seed will play Moscow-born Frenchwoman Tatiana Golovin, who ended the run of China's Zheng Jie with a scrappy 3-6, 6-3, 6-2 victory in the quarters.

Men's sixth seed Ivan Ljubicic had an easier outing after he produced 34 winners to sweep past Argentine Agustin Calleri, 7-6, 6-3, and into the semis. The win kept the Croatian second behind Roger Federer in match victories this season. While the world number one boasts a 25-1 record in 2006, Ljubicic stands at 24-3.

Ljubicic's fellow Croat Mario Ancic was unable to get past his Argentine opponent third seed David Nalbandian, though, falling to a 6-2, 6-2.

Sharapova's triumph in the battle of former grand slam winners put her within two more victories of a second consecutive title after winning in Indian Wells less than a fortnight ago.

"I knew I had to be consistent against her,"

Sharapova told reporters. "She's not going to overpower me, she's just going to try to make me hit another ball."

"I took my opportunities, took my chances, and that was important." The 18-year-old, runner-up here to Kim Clijsters last year, held her nerve after losing three of four times against Myskina in 2004.

Five of the nine games in the second set were breaks of serve as momentum shifted back and forth. Sharapova finished the winner on Myskina's forehand wide.

Sharapova has beaten fellow teenager Golovin both times they have met.

Golovin needed more than two hours to claim victory on Jie's fourth double fault. Jie had been the first Chinese woman reach the last eight at Miami.

The match was plagued by 27 break points as holding serve became a chore. Golovin converted eight of her 14 chances, while Jie was successful on six of 13.

With Golovin yet to beat Sharapova, the Frenchwoman knows she will have her work cut out.



SHARAPOVA greets crowd after victory.

Cantonjos triumphs

A2C Allan Cantonjos, a member of the Philippine Air Force chess team, scored 6 points in 7 rounds to top the 2006 National Chess Federation of the Philippines Region 4 Elimination in Cabuyao, Laguna, and take home the P7,000 cash prize and trophy. The event was bankrolled by Cabuyao Mayor Nila Aguilto. Cantonjos and the other qualifiers from Region IV advanced to the semifinals of the 2006 Chess Olympiad in May, Ricasfort. Butch Villaverde, and Riche Jaccson scored 5.5 points to tie for second to fourth places. Vicenta Vargas had five points to land fifth. Other qualifiers were Michael Teves, Ruel Gonzales, Michael Palma, Manny Yu, Dennis San Juan, Ferdinand Palermio, Henry Ratoks, Celerino Vizco, Ryan Dungca, John Perzeus Orozco, Henry Boroc, Balben Corpuz and Aaron Krishna. NM Marlon Benardino

PCCderby

BIG TIME cockfighting shifts to Pasay City Cockpit today with the staging of another 4-cock derby featuring 60 fights. The derby, supported by Segupaan Complex 3000, is hosted by Tony Lasala of San Luis entry. Among those competing for the P300,000 top purse are Benjie Lim, Pox Estrellado, Jun Topacio, Patrick Antonio, Mayor Dennis Pineda, Pepito Ngo, Boy Royo, Jake Macasael, Madambayan brothers, Jito Roque, Rio de Guzman, Maj. Bobby Doromal, Boy Layag, Dodie Villanubio, Ray Briones, Rap. Butch Pichay, Rap. Jing Paras and Rudy Albano. Call 843-1990, 843-1746 and 816-750.

P4.4M pot

AN IRRESISTIBLE prize of P4.4 million, which is guaranteed by WTJ Sports and Amusement Corp., will be up for grabs in the Summer Salpukan 6-cock derby on April 26, 29, May 2, 4, 6, 11 and 13 at Makati Coliseum. Promoters Lito Orillaza, Rudy Salud and William Co. of WTJ said that aside from the P3 million cash prize, the winners will also get two brand-new Toyota cars and two motorcycles. Entry fee is P11,000. The champions will get their prizes after the derby. Contact 896-3545.

RCI wins

RED Creek (RCI) of Iggy Arroyo and Boy Jiao bested Binangonan Balbina of the Ito Ynares and Richard Bates, and Mulawin C. VGB of F Berin to rule the championship round Thursday night of the National Cockers Association's end-of-March 7-cock derby at the Roligon Mega Cockpit. The next NCA derby is scheduled April 4 and 8, hosted by Boy Velez, Johnny Jalandon, Boy Jiao and Amboy Manlapaz. It will be the first of three NCA 7-cock derbies for the month. RCI posted 5.5 points.



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FOXTROT



MARVIN

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PUGAD BABOY

BY PM. JUNIOR

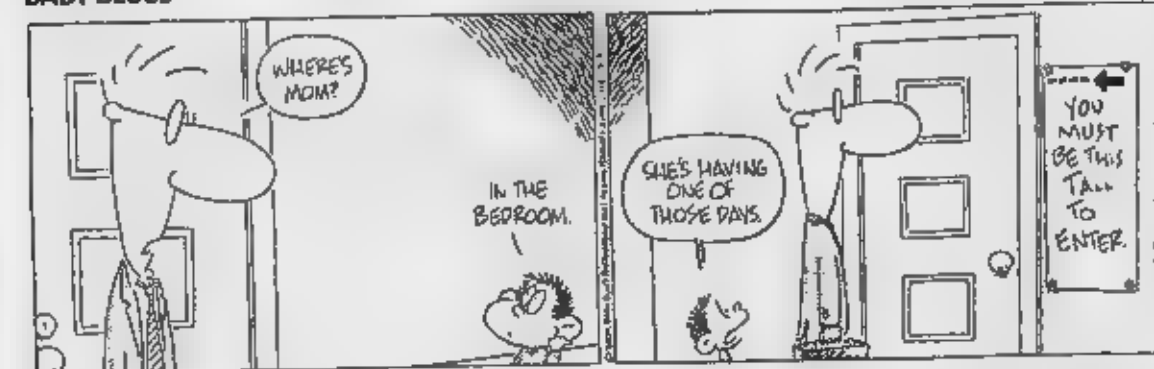


BABY BLUES

BY JERRY SCOTT

MUTTS

BY PATRICK McDONNELL



ATOMO AND WEBOY

BY LYRA GARCELLANO

DIVINE COMEDY

BY STEVEN PABAJNAS



HOROSCOPE

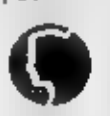
BY FRANCIS DRAKE

YOU BORN TODAY: You're determined. You never give up if you believe strongly in something. Essentially, you're a fighter. However, you're also an excellent team player. You're witty, lighthearted and yet you have nerves of steel. You know how to survive in changing times. The year ahead is excellent for partnerships and relationships. It's an excellent year for marriage. Enjoy social times!

Birthdate of: Pavel Bure, hockey player; Gordie Howe, hockey player; Ewan McGregor, actor.



ARIES (March 21 to April 19): You feel a bit territorial about your possessions today. Don't worry. If you don't want to share something, you don't have to. (This possessive feeling will pass soon.)



GEMINI (May 21 to June 20): You need some time by yourself today. A little peace and quiet will help you sort through something. Sneak off and grab some solitude.



LEO (July 23 to Aug. 22): You're generally aware of your actions. However, forewarned is forearmed. Today, something rather public will occur where people notice you, no matter how briefly.



TAURUS (April 20 to May 20): The Moon is in your sign today. In all likelihood it will make you feel a bit more emotional about something. But it's nothing you can't handle. In fact, things tend to go your way today.



CANCER (June 21 to July 22): Conversations with a female friend or friends will be significant today. Someone may feel the need to share a secret with you or confide in you in some way.



VIRGO (Aug. 23 to Sept. 22): Because you have a strong need for adventure today and a desire to learn something new, give yourself an opportunity to do something different. Go someplace you've never been before.

MIKROKOSMOS

BY JOMIKE TEJIDO



BEN

BY DANIEL SHELTON



KIKO MACHINE

BY MANIX ABRERA



LOVEKNOTS

BY ELIZABETH CHIONGLO



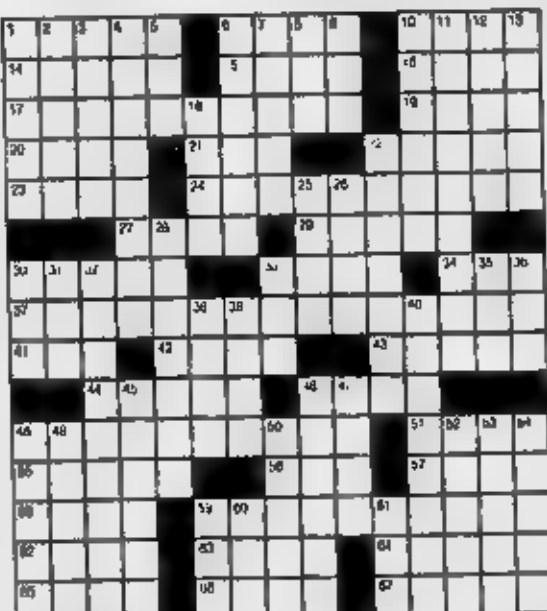
TULDOK

BY PAPU AND TATUM MILAMBILING



DAILY CROSSWORD

- ACROSS**
- Pagan gods
 - Cheese coated in wick
 - Little snakes
 - Playful caper
 - Be an also-ran
 - Flaming Gorge state
 - Kind of parade
 - Window part
 - Singer Brickell
 - Quick-cash source
 - Thirst-quencher
 - Hayes of "Will and Grace"
 - Spacecraft protector
 - Sun, left
 - Flamenco
 - Counter snake?
 - Lend a hand
 - Fairy queen
 - Write and send
 - Begged brew
 - Declared
 - Sleep disorder
 - Carnivals
 - Rob or Edmund
 - Goes in haste
 - "Breaker-breaker" buddy
 - "When We Dead Awaken" dramatist
 - Most degree
 - Scholarly book
 - Golfer
 - "Champagne Tony"
 - Like asbestos
 - Russian emperor
 - Hostly shade
 - Savor
 - Dispatch
 - Heavy abbrev.
 - Time in pants, e.g.



By Jim Page
New York, NY

3/31/06

Thursday's Puzzle Solved



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- DOWN**
- "Psycho" motel
 - Battery terminal
 - Sky-ll
 - Courtyards
 - Card holder
 - TCU or MIT
 - Selected social classes
 - Religious doctrine
 - Blond shade
 - Shea
 - baseballer
 - Mother's helper
 - Distinguished political leader
 - Committee
 - Piece of broken pottery
 - Bojor and Haley's co-star
 - Two-man crosscut
 - Those ones
 - Bargain
 - hunter's delight
 - Geographical shaper
 - Tiller locale
 - Run-out of gas
 - Architect
 - Once owned
 - Vital statistic
 - Actress Arthur
 - Casino game

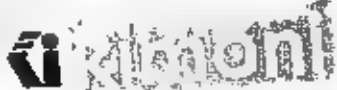
39 Pugilist's weapon
40 Ghostly
46 Frightened, in the Ozarks
48 Test paper?
47 W...-wip
48 Handful of weapons

- Very chubby
- Kind of drum
- Leg-up
- Burave
- theatricality
- Pass on (to)
- Not 'agin'
- D-Day craft
- School org.

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SHOPPING HOURS: APRIL 22, SATURDAY, 12:00 NOON TO 12:00 MIDNIGHT
APRIL 23, SUNDAY, 1:00 AM TO 10:00 PM

APRIL 22, SATURDAY

6:00 PM Special Mizuno Activity
6:30 PM Mizuno Celebrity Challenge
7:00 PM Open House Party

APRIL 23, SUNDAY

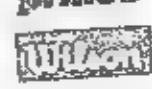
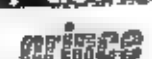
9:00 AM Holy Mass
4:00 PM Special Mizuno Activity
5:00 PM Mizuno Celebrity Challenge

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For inquiries about the Mizuno event, please call Nicole Comanila at 757-9156.

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SACHA JONES of New Zealand, returns a shot at Elena Chernyakova of Russia during their 17th Mitsubishi Lancer ITF Junior Circuit Series match at the Rizal Memorial Tennis Center. Jones won, 6-3, 7-5. RYAN LIM

Dy gains last 8 versus Russian

By Marc Anthony Reyes

DENISE DY CONTINUED HER IMPRESSIVE run yesterday to reach the quarterfinals of the rain-marred 17th Mitsubishi Lancer junior tennis championships at the Rizal Memorial Tennis Center.

The only remaining Filipino bet, Dy, seeded fifth here, backed out a 6-3, 6-1 triumph over Thailand ninth seed Varatchay Wongteanchai to set up a duel against Russian third seed Maya Gavrlova, who bundled out Israel's Ilana Agranovich, 6-0, 6-0.

A finalist in last year's Asian Oceania junior championship in Australia and the Thailand age-group tourney, Dy was hardly threatened in the 45-minute match.

"If I play the way I did the past two matches I think I have a strong chance of making it all the way," said Dy, ranked No. 7 in the Asian junior circuit and winner of two bronze medals during the last Southeast Asian Games in the women's team and girls doubles.

At 16, Dy has shown maturity on the court, displaying killer instinct hardly seen among her local counterparts, according to tennis officials who expect her to represent the country in the 2007 SEA Games.

If she makes it past Gavrlova, who is ranked

No. 53 in the world, Dy, the world's No. 59, could meet top seed Sacha Jones of New Zealand, who beat her for the Malaysian age-group champion this year, in the semifinals.

Jones marched worry-free to the next round with a 6-3, 7-5 win over Elena Chernyakova of Russia. She will next meet seventh seed Noppawan Lertcheewakarn of Thailand, who defeated Hong Kong's Zijun Yang, 6-0, 6-4.

The boy's action was stopped because of the rains but not after top seed Sanam Singh of India had eliminated Rasmus Moller of Denmark, 6-1, 6-3.

Third seed Hsin Han Lee of Chinese Taipei ousted Dennis Layola of the United States, 6-2, 6-4, while fourth seed Jeevan Neduchezhiyan of Indonesia bundled out Jin Kosler of Czech Republic, 6-3, 6-2, before the downpour interrupted play.

Also advancing to the quarterfinals in the girls division were second seed Krystyna Antonychuk of Ukraine, who brushed off Monika Sirolova, 6-1, 6-2. She will face 11th seed Veronica Li of the US, who won over Stephanie Vogt of Liechtenstein, 6-3, 6-1.

American Chloe Jones also made it to the next round with a 6-1, 6-0 rout of 14th seed Yurina Koshino. Her next foe is No. 8 seed Stefane Voegelé of Switzerland, who drubbed Sandhya Nagaraj of India, 6-3, 6-4.

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ENTERTAINMENT

Editor Emmie G. Vefarde

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Ryan C is first judge named for 'Philippine Idol'

By Bayani San Diego Jr.

AWARD-WINNING COMPOSER RYAN Cayabyab is looking forward to his stint as judge on "Philippine Idol," set to premiere on ABC 5 in July.

Cayabyab is the first to be named out of three who would make up the panel, exactly like the one on "American Idol."

Would he be the local counterpart of "AI's" technical Randy Jackson, the supportive Paula Abdul or the nasty Simon Cowell?

"I'll just be as Filipino as I am," Cayabyab told INQUIRER. "I will not irritate anyone."

News of Cayabyab's assignment was relayed by Terra Daffon, senior vice president for Corporate Affairs of ABC 5, which acquired the local license for the wildly popular reality TV series from FremantleMedia. The two other judges, plus two hosts, will be named shortly, according to Daffon.

Instructions

Cayabyab said the RP "Idol" producers had given him clear instructions to "retain my personality," and that the only requirement is "to tell the truth to the contestants."

On second thought, since he is a music teacher, he surmised, "I [could] be the 'technical' guy, that's my training."

He might also be something between the effusive Abdul and the cantankerous Cowell.

"I'm sure I'd want to help the contestants improve," Cayabyab explained. "I will definitely push and challenge them. If I can get my message across in a fun way, that would be great."

He finds this very quality in Cowell, commendable. "He is so real. His comments are so exact. His gift is that he puts his criticisms in colorful terms."

Overall, he said, everything's up in the air as of now. "I can't predict what I will be or what I will do in front of the cameras. The process may try my patience and turn me into an ogre!"

Auditions

Auditions will be held in Manila, Cebu and Davao over the next few months.

One thing's for sure, Mr. C has specific requirements.

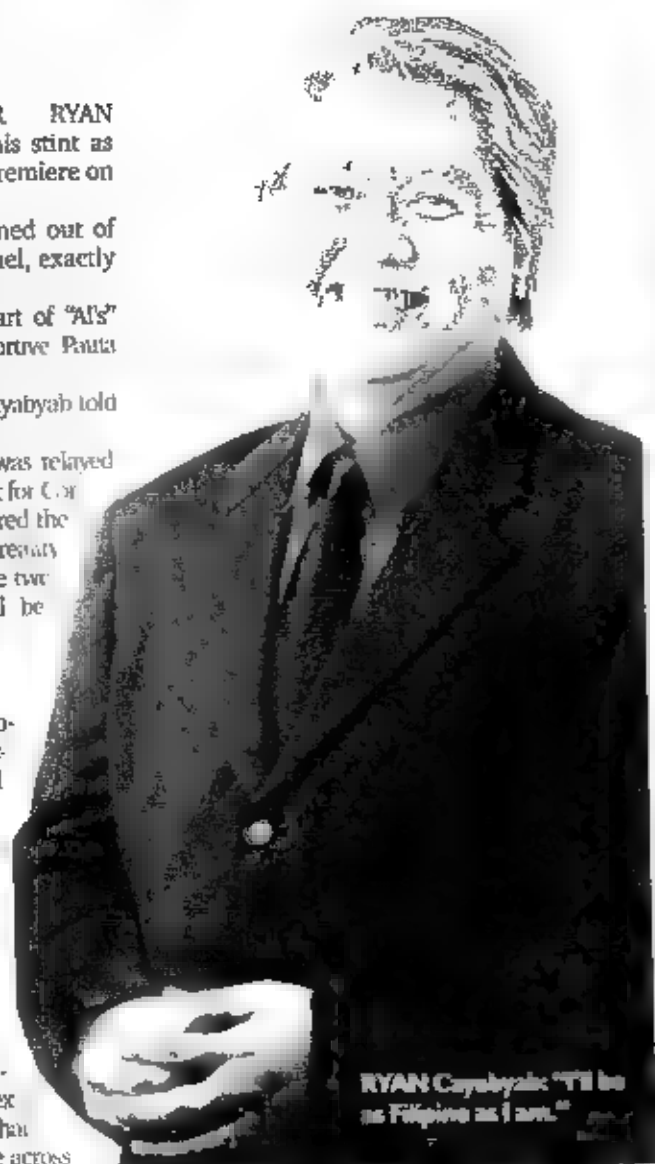
"I'm always on the lookout for someone different," he said. "I was so happy when I first heard Cynthia Pang audition for the Ambivalent Crowd in the 1970s. I got that same feeling when I heard

Anna Fegi and Luke Mejares sing at the Smokey Mountain tryouts in Cebu and Chedi Vergara in Manila in the 1990s."

Cayabyab admitted that he was feeling the pressure to produce a worthy lineup of "Philippine Idol" aspirants especially since this season's "AI" contestants are the best ever.

In the present batch, Cayabyab is placing his bets on Chris Daughtry and Mandisa for their vocal chops, but he also thinks Katharine McPhee and Taylor Hicks score points for on-cam charisma.

"Taylor gives his all and makes the audience feel good in his every performance," Cayabyab said. "Local singers could learn from this AI crop. There are other ways to perform than just making *buru* [belting] and screaming."



RYAN Cayabyab: "I'll be as Filipino as I am."

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Precious Lara would like to change RP beauty tilts system

By Nini Valera

2005 MISS INTERNATIONAL Precious Lara Quigaman would like to see reforms in beauty tilts.

"There are things I'd like to change about the Bb. Pilipinas," Precious Lara told INQUIRER in an exclusive interview. She would start, she said, with the system.

"Most people are always late, and I hate that because I'm always early. People can't just be late and give 'Filipino time' as an excuse."

There's also the way the search is conducted, Precious Lara added.

"The training is done at the Araneta Center. All the girls go there. I'd like to see searches for beautiful girls in different parts of the country. Also, the training period is so short."

As a role model, the 23-year-old graduate of a media productions course from a university in Bristol, United Kingdom, said she wants to encourage the youth by "living a life that would inspire them."



QUIGAMAN: "Everybody's always late."

As a beauty queen, she said, she would not let anyone look down on her.

"Just because we parade in skimpy swimwear during the pageant... [That is] for the judges to see if a contestant has a good body and how comfortable she feels about her body."

Although there were times when she wondered if she wasn't being exploited, she said she knows for sure that she wouldn't knowingly allow that to happen.

She has refused to sign a contract that would have her endorse a brand of liquor, for instance. She did sign up to pitch Centrum, a multi-vitamin product that espouses the idea of being a complete person.

"That is what I want to be," Precious Lara said. "Complete—not [taken] in bits and pieces."

Being a beauty queen is a part of her life, she said, not the totality. "But I can help shape other lives because I am a beauty queen."

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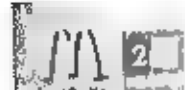
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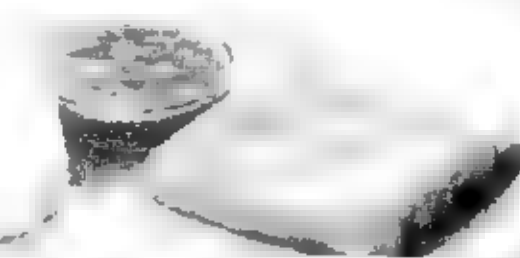
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'Starstruck' winners launch performing careers

HOW ARE THE LATEST
"Starstruck" Final Four doing as TV
talents, now that the tilt has ended
and they have been proclaimed top
winners? We've made it a point to

catch their different guestings on GMA-7 programs, and can share these notes:

From the very start of the talent competition, the female finalists

VIEWFINDER

Nestor U. Torre



looked more promising than their male counterparts. Ultimately, Mariky Cielo won the top phan, but the best female hets, Iwa Moto and Jackie Rice, are both coming on strong as professional TV performers.

This early Jackie is establishing herself as an ingenue leading lady. Contrastingly, Iwa is coming across more strongly, and could in fact end up as a *bida-kontrabida*.

We don't know if this is a part of her career plan. If it isn't she has to do something to soften her screen image, which tends to be "matronly."

Her hair coloring also lends her look a certain harshness which further conjures up those *kontrabida* limitations.

We wish that Iwa rectifies this impression, because she's much too new and young to be typecast in a negative mold. She will get many more roles if she opts more for versatility than a consistently "strong" projection.

For his part, Marky first disappointed some people, because he didn't look like a leading man. However, the ace up his sleeve turned out to be his exceptional dancing ability. In fact, he's an even better dancer than another "Starstruck" lead discovery, Mark Herras.

But even great dancing can't fuel a durable performing career, so Marky has to summon up other strengths to further boost his chances for sustained stardom.

Thus early, he's showing signs that he could also become a good actor. And, interestingly, his "ordinary" looks could even end up working in Marky's favor, because they make him more accessible to the many viewers out there who aren't matinee-idol handsome.

Finally, the fact that Marley has ethnic roots is his key contribution to the local show biz scene, because it debunks the big colonial lie that you have to be *tsisoy* to make it in the biz.

Marky is *Pino*y, not *tiso*y, but he's making it in a big way. We hope that this will open doors for other non-*tiso*y talents in local show business.

As for the last member of the Final Four, Gian, he's doing least well as a TV performer, because he looks stoic and awkward. He has to light a fire

**LACKIE** Rice

under himself fast, if he wants his fledgling career to prosper.

Movies on Cinemax

Cinemax screens these viewing treats in April: "Beetlejuice," with Michael Keaton playing a ghost "hired" to scare off a hunted house's new owners; "Born Yesterday," a comedy classic starring Judy Holliday and William Holden.

"Death Becomes Her," topbilling Meryl Streep and Goldie Hawn.

"House of Wax," a 1953 horror classic with Vincent Price and Charles Bronson; "Introducing Dorothy Dandridge," with Halle Berry as the beautiful African-American icon.

"Mystic River," a Clint Eastwood film; "Phantom of the Rue Morgue," another horror classic, with Karl Malden; "Pleasantville," with Tobey Maguire and Reese Witherspoon, "Reality Bites," a film directed by Ben Stiller; and starring himself, Winona Ryder and Ethan Hawke.

"Sleepless in Seattle," the quintessential romantic comedy top-billing Tom Hanks and Meg Ryan.

"The Appaloosa," a 1966 western starring Marlon Brando.

Plus: "The Blues Brothers," "The Great Race," "The Last Hurrah," and "Wyatt Earp."

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2

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R18

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3

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4

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6:15	8:50	

R18

5

ICE AGE 2

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GP

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2	ICE AGE 2 1:40, 3:50, 6:00, 8:10, 10:30
3	ICE AGE 2 12:30, 2:50, 5:10, 7:30, 10:00
4	VENOM 2:15, 4:25, 6:35, 8:45, 11:00

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<p>JUST FRIENDS R13 12:50, 3:10 5:30, 7:50 10:10</p>	<p>THE FUGITIVE R13 1:40, 3:40 5:40 7:40, 9:40</p>	<p>ICE AGE 2 G 11:30, 1:30, 3:30 5:30, 7:30, 9:30</p>

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2 JUST FRIENDS
MTRCB R 13, 11:40, 4:20, 9:00
NANNY MCPHEE
MTRCB GP 2:00, 6:40

4 VENOM
MTRCB R-13
1:20, 3:30, 5:40, 7:50, 10:00

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JAM PERGAMON, AGUN-TV (ABC)



StarHanks
LOS ANGELES—Double Oscar-winner Tom Hanks has signed on to play a sacked advertising executive who ends up working in a coffee shop in the film version of "How Starbuck's Saved My Life," reports said Tuesday.

Hanks will star in the movie that will be directed by "Good Will Hunting" filmmaker Gus Van Sant and based on a yet-to-be-written book that Universal Pictures bought up in advance.

The proposed book, to be published by Penguin's Gotham Books, is a memoir by Michael Gates Gill, a former J. Walter Thompson ad executive who was made redundant and found himself walking out of his local coffee bar with a job.

AFP

On Broadway
NEW YORK—OSCAR winning actress Julia Roberts makes her Broadway stage debut on Tuesday in a production of Richard Greenberg's "Three Days of Rain" after a career solely devoted to the silver screen.

Roberts, 38, was chosen for the play last year with producers hoping her cinema box office magic will draw big audiences to the Bernard B. Jacobs theatre in New York.

AFP



Two DJs
MANOLET "MANO" Dario, one of the country's top club scene DJs, "front-acts" for DJ Tiesto, adjudged the world's best, tonight at the Philippine International Conference Center. The party, sponsored by Gas Jeans and Motorola, starts at 10. Call 895-7471.

Wahlberg baby
LOS ANGELES—Actor-singer Mark Wahlberg and his longtime girlfriend, Rhea Durham, have welcomed their second child, a baby boy, Durham's publicist said.

Durham, a model, gave birth in a Los Angeles hospital on March 22, Durham's manager Liz Dagostino said Tuesday. Wahlberg and Durham also have a 2-year-old daughter.

AP

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2 MOMENTS OF LOVE 12:40 3:00 5:20 7:40 10:00	7 NANNY MCPHEE 1:00 3:15 5:30 7:45 10:00
3 LUCKY NUMBER SLEVIN 12:30 2:50 5:10 7:30 9:50	8 VENOM 1:25 3:30 5:35 7:40 9:45
4 JUST FRIENDS 11:15 1:25 3:35 5:45 7:55 10:00	9 SHE'S THE MAN 12:50 3:10 5:30 7:50 10:00
5 ICE AGE 2 11:10 1:20 3:30 5:40 7:50 10:00	10 ULTRAVIOLET 1:10 3:20 5:30 7:40 9:50

ERMITA

1 ICE AGE 2 12:20 2:20 4:20 6:20 8:25 10:00	5 VENOM 12:20 2:20 4:20 6:20 8:25 10:00
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4 MOMENTS OF LOVE 12:30 2:50 5:10 7:30 9:50	

METRO EAST

1 SHE'S THE MAN 1:00 3:00 5:00 7:00 9:00	5 VENOM 12:30 2:40 4:50 7:00 9:10
2 ICE AGE 2 12:30 2:45 5:00 7:15 9:15	6 NANNY MCPHEE ULTRAVIOLET 5:00 7:00 9:00
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4 JUST FRIENDS 11:00 1:00 3:00 5:00 7:00 9:00	8 MOMENTS OF LOVE 11:25 1:50 4:15 6:40 9:05

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1 BASIC INSTINCT 2	4 VENOM
2 LUCKY NUMBER SLEVIN	5 ICE AGE 2
3 JUST FRIENDS	6 MOMENTS OF LOVE

CMSQUARE MALABON

1 MOMENTS OF LOVE	1 ICE AGE 2
2 ICE AGE 2	2 LUCKY NUMBER SLEVIN
3 RESERVE	3 BASIC INSTINCT 2
4 RESERVE	4 VENOM

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2 LUCKY NUMBER SLEVIN
3 BASIC INSTINCT 2
4 VENOM

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2 16 BLOCKS
3 MOMENTS OF LOVE
4 GLORY ROAD

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1 ICE AGE 2	1 LUCKY NUMBER SLEVIN
2 LUCKY NUMBER SLEVIN	2 MOMENTS OF LOVE
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4 MOMENTS OF LOVE	4 VENOM
5 VENOM	

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3 ICE AGE 2
4 VENOM

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6 LUCKY NUMBER SLEVIN	6 VENOM

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2 SHE'S THE MAN
3 MOMENTS OF LOVE
4 ICE AGE 2
6 HOUSE OF FURY
6 VENOM

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1 ICE AGE 2	1 GLORY ROAD
2 SYRIANA	2 MOMENTS OF LOVE
3 V FOR VENDETTA	3 FINAL DESTINATION 3
4 THE DARK	4 ICE AGE 2
5 MOMENTS OF LOVE	6 DATE MOVIE
6 GLORY ROAD	6 V FOR VENDETTA

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PODIUM ICE AGE 2 11:30 FS / 11:55 MF / 02:00 04:05 / 06:55 LFS 06:10 LMF / 09:45 END JUST FRIENDS 02:15 FS / 02:45 MF / 04:50 06:55 / 8:30 LFS 09:00 LMF / 10:35 END	SM MEGACINEMA 16 BLOCKS 11:40FS / 12:00 MF / 02:10 LFS / 04:20 LMF 06:10 END JUST FRIENDS SHE'S THE MAN RESERVED NANNY MCPHEE ULTRAVIOLET V FOR VENDETTA FINAL DESTINATION 3 ICE AGE 2 ICE AGE 2 VENOM MOMENTS OF LOVE	SM CITY FAIRVIEW THE DARK FEARLESS V FOR VENDETTA ULTRAVIOLET JUST FRIENDS MOMENTS OF LOVE VENOM NANNY MCPHEE ICE AGE 2 FINAL DESTINATION 3 SHAGGY DOG SHE'S THE MAN	SM CITY MANILA ICE AGE 2 V FOR VENDETTA SHE'S THE MAN V FOR VENDETTA NANNY MCPHEE ULTRAVIOLET MOMENTS OF LOVE THE DARK FEARLESS FINAL DESTINATION 3 16 BLOCKS JUST FRIENDS
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SM CITY MARILAO ICE AGE 2 MOMENTS OF LOVE ULTRAVIOLET MOMENTS OF LOVE	SM CITY STA. ROSA VENOM THE DARK MOMENTS OF LOVE ICE AGE 2	SM CITY CAGAYAN ICE AGE 2 FINAL DESTINATION 3 MOMENTS OF LOVE VENOM
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Pampanga-born ... From page A2-6



are always singled out. To whom do you attribute these qualities?

Both my parents. I got my outgoing traits from my mother. I learned humility from my father and inherited his sense of humor.

How challenging was it to get where you are now, career-wise, especially as an Asian American helping break barriers in mainstream American media?

It is quite challenging. But it made me want it more and try harder. We can all do be whatever we want, and I was out to prove that. There are still challenges [but] they make me stronger.

In what way is being a former Miss Teen USA helping?

It was the stepping stone I needed. I gained confidence and found myself. I felt proud to be an Asian American and represent the USA as Miss Teen USA.

1998. I felt that I was given an extra responsibility to do something with my title.

And how does being a former beauty queen pose an extra challenge?

As with my ethnicity, I have to prove yourself and work harder. But that's in my personality.

The live coverage of your "Miss Teen USA" triumph was pre-empted by a televised address by then President Clinton on the Lewinsky scandal. Did you wish he had chosen a different night?

Some things are out of my hands. But it was fun because I got to watch myself crowned on TV with my family and friends. And I was still nervous as I watched, as if I was still competing!

You were a backstage correspondent for the 50th Miss USA pageant. Didn't you want to join the Miss USA, too?

Miss Teen USA and Miss USA get the same opportunities. Having won in 1998, I did not want to try out again and take that chance away from someone else. Instead, I started working and forwarding my career.

What is the best part of living in New York and being a correspondent for "Entertainment Tonight"?

All the wonderful events, once-in-a-lifetime opportunities and the people I meet. For example, I had a private piano session with Clive Davis and Barry Manilow. Recently, I walked through an exhibit with Drew Barrymore where she showed me her personal private photos from Africa. I just love my job!

What has been your most memorable experience so far as co-host of MTV's "Total Request Live" and previous MTV specials?

My favorite so far is covering the "Live 8" concert. Wow, it was touching—1.3 million people in Philadelphia. MTV is always fun and fresh.

Name some celebrities that you are still hoping to meet and why.

Demi Moore, for her career longevity and timeless beauty. Angelina Jolie—I'd love to talk to her in person about her work as a UN Goodwill Ambassador. I have met everyone else I've ever wanted to meet. They have all come to MTV's "Total Request Live" or on "Entertainment Tonight."

If you could invite several celebrities to a dream dinner, who would you ask?

Jim Carrey, Alicia Keys, Stevie Wonder, Kate Hudson and Robert Redford, just to name a few.

What is one thing about you that most people don't know and they would probably be surprised if they knew?

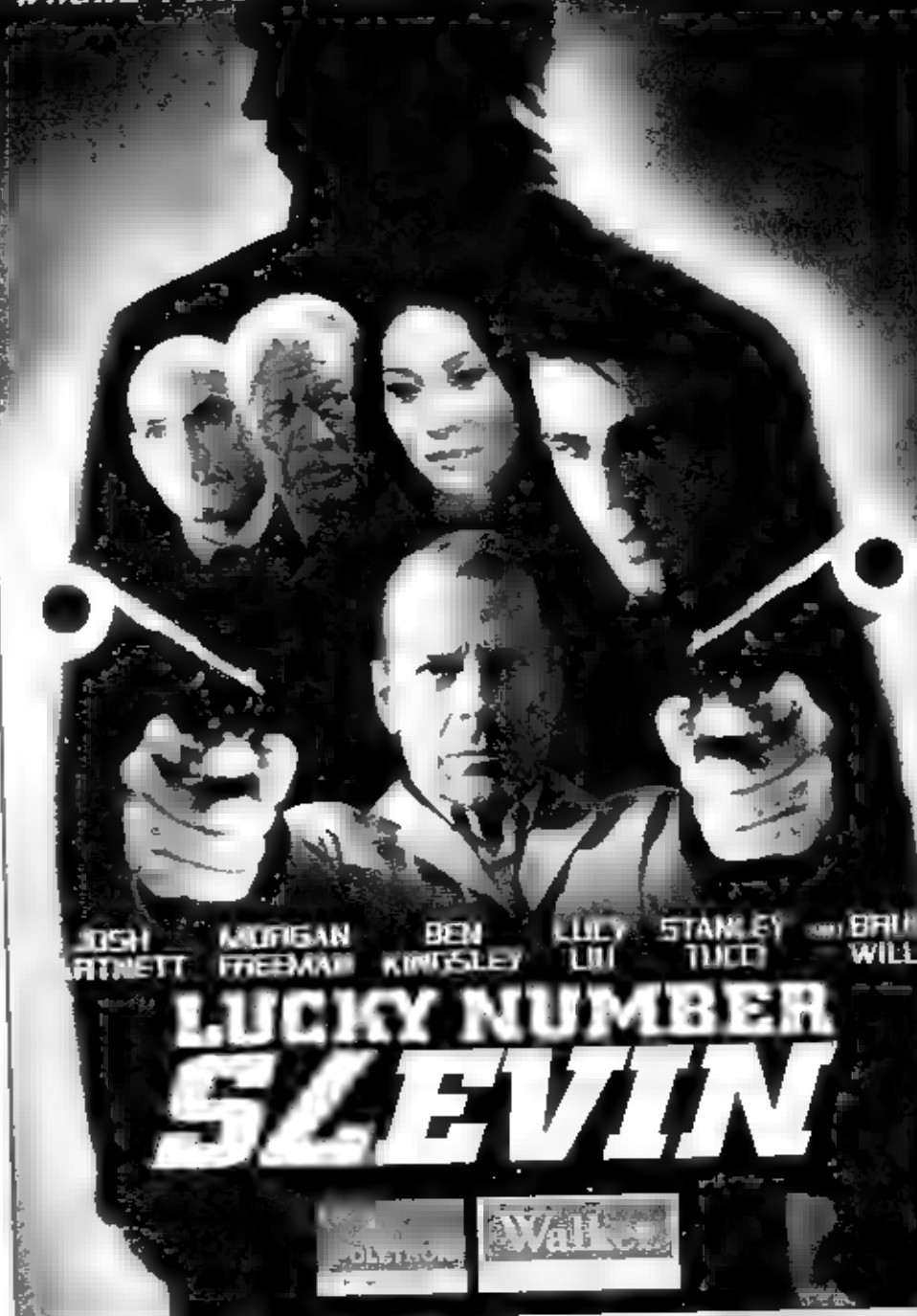
That I get very nervous before I talk to anyone at work. I become quiet. I try to play the interview out in my head first. Sometimes nervousness makes me sick in the stomach.

A college scholarship came with your Miss Teen USA title. Do you still plan to go to college?

Sure, I'd love to go one day. My father got his college degree at

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6 ROOM	VENOM
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8 ROOM	MOMENTS OF LOVE
9 ROOM	V FOR VENDETTA
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2	HOTEL
3 ROOM	FINAL DESTINATION
4 ROOM	HOUSE OF FURY

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2	AEON FLUX

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2	ICE AGE 2
3 ROOM	V FOR VENOM
4 ROOM	

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2	MOMENTS OF LOVE
3 ROOM	ULTRAVIOLET

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2	MOMENTS OF LOVE

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4	

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4	

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3	16
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2	ICE AGE 2
3	RESERVED

I recently walked through a photo exhibit with Drew Barrymore'

45, so I can, too!

How did you prepare for your Oscar pre-show hosting stint? We had two days of rehearsal. We did practice interviews with stand-ins. So, on the day of the Oscars itself, I knew exactly who I would be talking to, and what

questions I would be asking. But there were few last-minute, on-the-spot interviews. I felt very comfortable and prepared.

What were you most nervous about?

I didn't get to see some of the Oscar-nominated movies and per-

formances. I was nervous that I'd run into some things that I was not familiar with. No one can see every movie.

But overall, I was relaxed. I've met most of the celebrities from "Entertainment Tonight" or on MTV, so I wasn't nervous. It was very structured and organized. They definitely had it together. I was just icing on the cake with the other co-hosts.

What was the most exciting part for you?

Seeing George Clooney again. He's very charming and his smile is contagious. Also, the opportunity to be in a show that was broadcast globally. In such a big stage or setting, I'm always proud to represent my heritage.

The most fun?

It's always fun to see what everyone wears. I saw Dolly Parton for the first time. She's so little!

You have acted on "The Bold and the Beautiful" and have guested

in several sitcoms. Is being an actress still one of your goals?

Yes, but acting is a craft that you have to master. You don't just jump into it.

What are your other dreams and goals, professionally and personally?

I want to do all that I can. Be an entrepreneur. Have a family one day. I can't wait to have Vanessa mini-mes walking around.

(E-mail the columnist at rmepales_5585@yahoo.com.)

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Pampanga-born Vanessa Minnillo going places

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LOS ANGELES—"I WOULD LOVE TO," SAID the Pampanga-born American TV show host and former Miss Teen USA Vanessa Minnillo when I asked if she would like to grace or judge a beauty contest in pageant-crazy Philippines.

Born at Clark Air Force Base in 1980, Vanessa is the daughter of a Filipina, Helen Berecero, and Vince Minnillo. Vanessa's parents met when he was a USAF aircrew member assigned at Clark. Crowned Miss Teen USA in 1998, this beautiful Filipino-American has been enjoying a winning career streak in entertainment.

The 5'8" tall summer is the New York correspondent of "Entertainment Tonight," the world's top syndicated entertainment news-magazine. She is a VJ on MTV's "Total Request Live" and has hosted several MTV specials.

Recently, Vanessa landed the plum assignment as one of the co-hosts of the Academy Awards' official red carpet arrivals show, "Oscar Countdown 2006." Vanessa's lovely Amerasian features and sweet, affable personality were showcased in the Oscar pre-show which was telecast in over 100 countries and watched by millions of viewers.

Vanessa has hurdled many challenges to get where she is now. According to Self magazine, the exotic-looking Vanessa, upon winning the Miss Teen USA title, was hurt when someone told a friend of hers, "How can she (Vanessa) represent the United States, looking the way she does?"

After her parents separated when she was 6, Vanessa constantly moved around, to such places as Florida and Nevada, with her mother and adopted older brother, Vincent. At one point, Vanessa lived in Turkey and Germany when her mother married another serviceman. Of those peripatetic times, Vanessa looked at the positive side: "I love travel and new experiences. Those were amazing learning experiences for me."

In high school, Vanessa finally enjoyed a settled life when she and her brother lived with their father (now retired) and stepmother (Donna Minnillo) in Charleston, South Carolina.

Despite stories of their estrangement, Vanessa never fails to point out in interviews the winning qualities that she inherited from her mother, a native of Leyte.

She is also grateful about her beauty contest background which, she believes, opened many doors for her. "With the proper mind-set, a woman can find that beauty contests are very



PHOTO BY JANEY SUSAN R. NEPALES

Miss Teen USA '98 is 'Entertainment Tonight's' New York correspondent—oh, and did you see her hosting the Oscar pre-show?

beneficial," she told me via e-mail. She judged the Miss Teen USA 2003 tilt and covered the backstage action in the 50th Miss USA pageant in 2001. These pageants, plus Miss Universe, are owned by Donald Trump in partnership with NBC.

Vanessa has been linked to New York Yankees baseball player Derek Jeter and actor Orlando Bloom. She appears as a former love interest of Nick Lachey in his new music video, "What's Left of Me." In Vogue's Oscar Awards-themed February issue, Vanessa was photographed as Jennifer Beals' memorable character in legwarmers and cut-off sweatshirt.

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There is an online photo of you wearing your Miss Teen USA sash with some members of the Filipino community of Charleston, South Carolina. How close are you to this community?

My mother was my biggest link with the Filipino community. Once I lived with my father and stepmom, it was hard to keep up with the community, but I always [never forget] my roots and how I grew up. My favorite dish is chicken adobo. I made my stepmom learn how to cook it for me. She still does this day.

You were born at Clark Air Force Base in Pampanga. Have you been back since to the Philippines?

I have not gone back but I look forward to the day when I can. I know it will be emotional for me.

Do you speak the Pampango dialect or understand Tagalog?

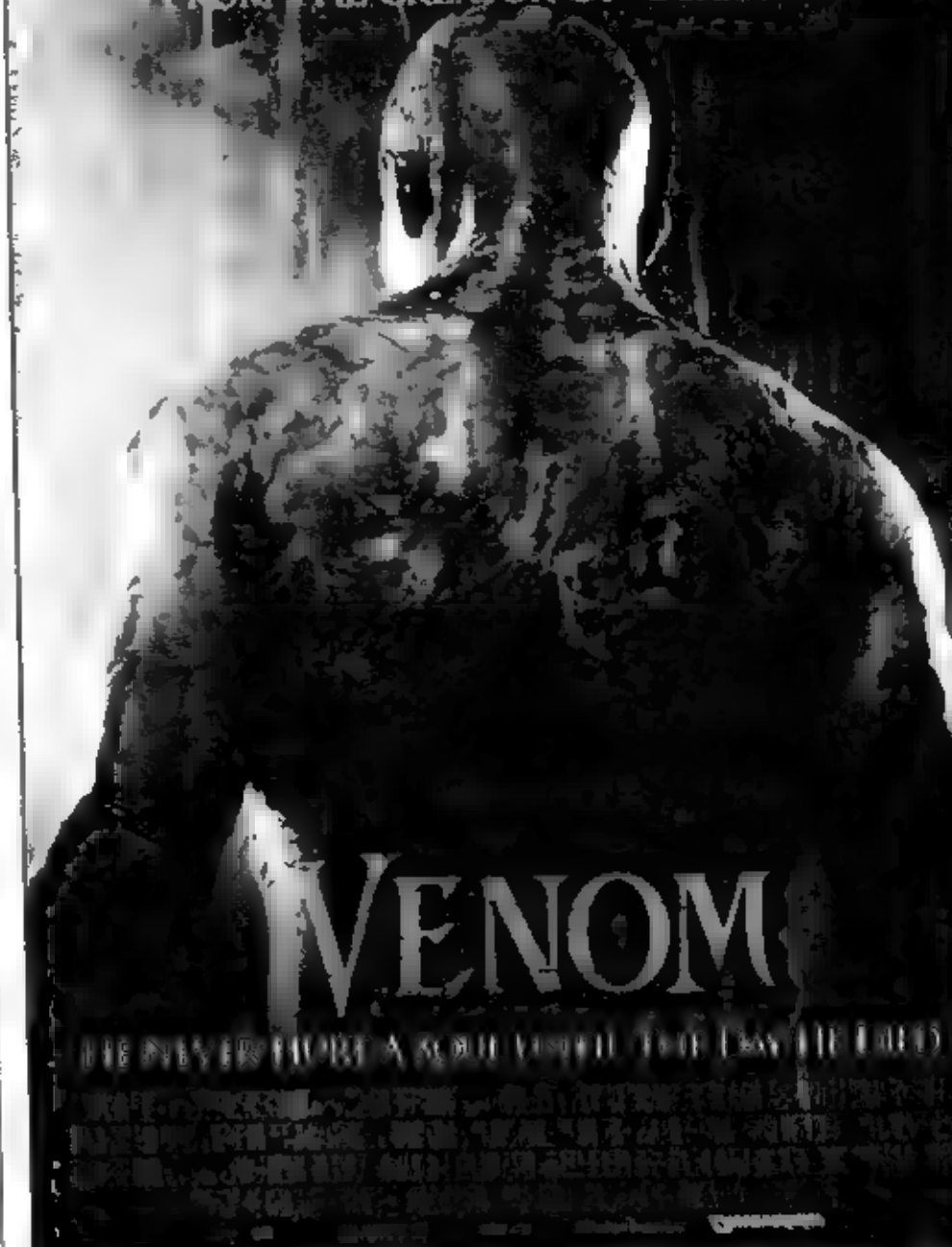
I know when a mother is telling her kid to stop or be quiet, or behave. I heard that a lot growing up. Ha-ha!

What qualities or traits do you have that you think came from the Filipino in you?

My spark! And my passion to follow my dream. I have to try a little harder than the next person, but that's what gives me the drive and desire. Also, my sensuality. I have my mother's eyes and looks that can say a lot, I think. My dad always says, "Your mother would give that look!" Reading about you, I notice that your sense of humor and affable personality

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COLORFUL genetically modified tilapia, developed by the Central Luzon State University, is providing good business for Tinglayan town. Many Kalinga markets won't take the fish, however, because buyers find the colors too strange.

But more reforms, better tax collection needed

By Doris C. Dumlaog

THE PHILIPPINES HAS AVERTED AN ECONOMIC CRISIS AND moved toward a "virtuous" path following recent strides in fiscal consolidation, but more reforms are needed to lock in gains and benefit the Filipino masses.

This was the key message sent yesterday by the country's multilateral and bilateral donors to President Macapagal-Arroyo and her economic team led by Finance Secretary Margarito Teves at the opening of the two-day Philippine Development Forum (formerly the Consultative Group Meeting) in Tagaytay.

Joachim von Amsberg, World Bank country director and co-chair of the 27th annual meeting with donors, said the international donor community recognized that the Philippines had seized the narrow window of opportunity to undertake front-loaded fiscal ad-

justment, particularly with the implementation of the two-pronged expanded value-added tax (VAT) reform.

"Last year demonstrated that a core set of sound macroeconomic policies could be pursued with success even in a contentious political context. In fact, some core policies have been protected from partisan politics," von Amsberg said.

"If 2005 was the year of the VAT and a virtuous circle of tax policy and market confidence, 2006 could become the year of tax collection, or the year of more and more equi-

RP DONORS/B2

ABS-CBN profit slumps on weak ad revenues

By Daxim L. Lucas

THE FINANCIAL TROUBLES OF ABS-CBN Broadcasting Corp.—the country's biggest broadcast network—showed no signs of easing as lower revenues and higher costs conspired to push profits lower last year.

In a briefing for investors and analysts yesterday, the company reported a 2005 net income of only P288 million, representing a 62-percent drop from the previous year's P751 million.

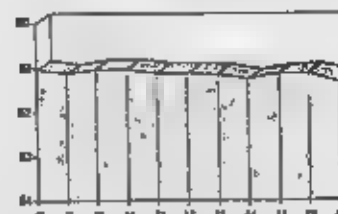
ABS-CBN's fortunes contrasted sharply with those of its rival GMA Network Inc., which recently reported a 2005 net income of P2 billion on the back of P9.4 billion in revenue.

The company was quick to acknowledge that its earnings were dented by the poor performance of its television programs.

"Airtime revenues remained weak, reflecting the lower ratings of its programs (in

ABS-CBN/B5

INDICATORS CURRENCIES



MARCH
PESO-DOLLAR RATE

P 51.25 = \$

As of 5 p.m., March 30, 2006

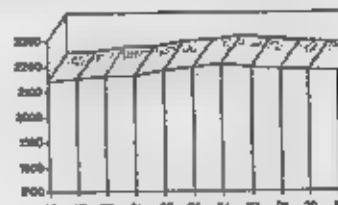
Y 117.72 = \$1

As of 5 p.m., March 30, 2006

GOLD: \$561.20-561.70

per ounce Hong Kong, March 29, 2006

STOCK MARKET



(See stock market report on Page B2)

Shares close flat

SHARE PRICES CLOSED LITTLE CHANGED yesterday as gains in telecom giant Philippine Long Distance Telephone (PLDT) offset profit-taking elsewhere, dealers said.

They said the government's decision to cut its economic growth targets this year coupled with prospects for a rise in interest rates

SHARES/B2

WHAT'S INSIDE

- MPC Online Ecozones' earnings down
- scare gaming firm expands/B5
- 10% in 2005/B10

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See flyers for details. Per DTI-NCR Permit No. 1021, Series of 2006

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CHINABANK

Your success is our business

Basic sells unit to Forum Energy

By Abigail L. Ho

SHAREHOLDERS OF LISTED FIRM BASIC Consolidated Inc. have approved the acquisition of subsidiary Basic Petroleum and Minerals Inc. (BPMT) by British-Canadian group Forum Energy Plc.

The approval, given during Basic's annual general meeting Wednesday, paved the way for the completion of Forum's acquisition of BPMT for \$17 million in cash and Forum shares.

"The merger of Basic's petroleum interests with those of (Forum's) is now subject to approval from the government of the Philippines," Forum chief executive David Robinson said in a statement. "The company will make a further announcement regarding the decision in due course."

Robinson earlier said that Forum's acquisition of BPMT was expected to give it immediate oil production, with a huge growth potential through the use of advanced technology.

The acquisition, he said, would provide Forum with an initial net production of 40 barrels of oil a day, as well as interests in nine oil fields that offered significant additional production and reserve potential.

"This acquisition creates an exceptional opportunity for us as we seek to grow our company and create maximum value for our shareholders," he said.

BPMT's assets include interests in nine offshore fields, including 8.47 percent in Nido, 12.41 percent in Matinloc and Pandan, 19.46 percent in North Matinloc, 28.6 percent in Libro, 10 percent in Tara, 7.03 percent in Bonita, 9.1 percent in West Lunapacan, 8.17 percent in Galoc and 27.7 percent in Service Contract 41, which covers 4,820 square kilometers and is located within the Sulu Sea.

Philippine Stock Exchange

(As of March 30, 2006)

STOCKS	OPEN	HIGH	LOW	CLOSE	VOLUME
FINANCIAL					
Asiatrust Dev Bank Inc.	3.7	3.7	3.7	3.7	6,000
Banco de Oro Univ. Bank	34.5	35	34	35	53,400
Bank of the Phil. Islands	62	62	62	62	2,082,400
China Banking Corp.	680	680	680	680	1,140
Cyberbank Corp.	18	19	18	19	300
Equitable Sav. Bank Inc.	0.43	0.47	0.43	0.47	33,580,000
Equitable P.O. Bank Inc.	76.5	77	76	76	57,600
International Exch. Bank	30	30.5	30	30	89,000
Metropolitan Bank & Trust	39	39	38.5	39	511,100
Phil. Bank of Comm. A	51	51	51	51	500
Philippine National Bank	34	34	34	34	12,000
Phil. Savings Bank	40	40	40	40	500
Rural Comm. Banking Corp.	13.5	13.5	13.25	13.25	34,700
Security Bank Corp.	41.5	41.5	41.5	41.5	451,000
Union Bank of the Phil.	36.5	37.5	36.5	37.5	32,500
OTHER FINANCIAL INSTITUTIONS					
Bankard Inc.	0.89	0.9	0.89	0.89	230,000
First Metro Invest. Corp.	26	27	26	27	35,000
Manulife Financial Corp.	317.5	317.5	317.5	317.5	70,000
Phil. Life Insurance Co.	162	165	162	165	6,100
San Life Financial Inc.	217.0	218.5	217.0	218.5	1,130
Seaview Corp.	0.94	0.95	0.93	0.94	8,280,000
INDUSTRIAL					
ENERGY POWER & WATER					
First Gen Corp.	44.5	45	44	45	883,000
First Phil. Hldgs. Corp.	44.5	45.5	44.5	45.5	885,300
Manila Electric Co. A	12.75	12.75	12.75	12.75	70,000
Manila Electric Co. B	20	20	19.75	19.75	300,800
Manila Water Co. Inc.	6.5	6.5	6.5	6.5	2,843,000
Petron Corp.	4.45	4.5	4.4	4.4	630,000
Trans-Asia Oil and Energy	0.90	0.93	0.93	0.93	100,000
FOOD, BEVERAGE & TOBACCO					
Ginebra San Miguel Inc.	15.2	15.2	15.2	15.2	51,780
Jollibee Foods Corp.	3.7	3.7	3.7	3.7	273,000
Panake House Inc.	3.7	3.95	3.7	3.95	765,000
Roxas Holdings Inc.	2.38	2.42	2.38	2.42	677,000
Swi Feed Inc.	0.195	0.195	0.19	0.19	210,000
San Miguel Corp. A	60.5	60.5	60	60.5	59,500
San Miguel Corp. B	81.5	83	81	81.5	64,500
Unimark Corp.	17.5	18	17.75	18	448,500
Vitacorp Corp.	0.29	0.29	0.29	0.29	980,000
CONSTRUCTION INFRASTRUCTURE & UTILITIES SERVICES					
SEACOR Inc.	0.31	0.31	0.31	0.31	1,890,000
SEACOR Philippines Inc.	1.44	1.48	1.44	1.44	805,000
SEACOR Philippines Inc.	4.1	4.1	4.1	4.1	404,000
CHEMICALS					
Euro-Med. Lab. Phil. Inc.	2.8	2.8	2.8	2.8	20,000
Matbay Vinyl Corp.	0.73	0.73	0.73	0.73	70,000
DIVERSIFIED INDUSTRIALS					
Steris Manufacturing	0.48	0.52	0.42	0.52	490,000
HOLDING FIRMS					
Agila Corp.	357.5	357.5	352.5	355	104,670
Adorn Equity Ventures	5	5	5	5	51,800
Alto Holdings Inc.	0.023	0.023	0.023	0.023	1,000,000
A. Serrano Corp.	2.6	2.65	2.55	2.55	3,323,000
APC Group Inc.	0.23	0.23	0.22	0.22	2,120,000
Anglo Phil. Holdings Corp.	0.91	0.91	0.88	0.88	1,340,000
Barotac Inc.	0.99	0.99	0.99	0.99	2,780,000
Bancorin Cons. Indus. Inc.	3.3	3.35	3.3	3.35	4,346,000
Bancorin Holdings Corp.	3.3	3.35	3.3	3.35	3,100,000
DMCI Holdings Inc.	2.9	3.05	2.9	3.05	1,200,000
Farmwest Dev. Corp.	1.28	1.28	1.24	1.24	253,000
House of Investments Inc.	0.24	0.245	0.235	0.245	700,000
J.G. Summit Holdings Inc.	0.27	0.27	0.27	0.27	230,000
MultiTech Inc.	0.011	0.011	0.011	0.011	4,180,000
Pacific	0.245	0.245	0.245	0.245	28,000
Prime Orion Phils. Inc.	0.145	0.145	0.14	0.14	3,050,000
Prime Media Holdings Inc.	225	227	227	227	44,500
Simphi Corp.	0.72	0.72	0.72	0.72	190,000
South China Resources Inc.	0.0575	0.0575	0.0575	0.0575	190,000
Unitel Res. & Holdings Co.	0.125	0.125	0.125	0.125	830,000
Welles Industries Inc.	0.125	0.125	0.125	0.125	830,000
PROPERTY					
Ayala Land Inc.	10.75	10.75	10.5	10.75	290,800
Arana Properties Inc.	0.33	0.33	0.33	0.33	120,300
Bella Corp.	1.1	1.1	1.1	1.1	3,670,000
Crown Equities Inc.	0.28	0.28	0.28	0.28	2,800,000
Cebu Holdings Inc.	1.86	1.86	1.84	1.84	530,000
Cebu Homes Inc.	1.7	1.7	1.7	1.7	7,000
Cebu Prop. Vent. A	1.05	1.08	1.05	1.05	580,000
Cyber Bay Corp.	0.205	0.21	0.205	0.21	920,000
Ever-Golden Resources Inc.	0.63	0.67	0.63	0.64	41,720,000
Ever-Golden Resources Inc.	0.029	0.029	0.029	0.029	200,000
Farmwest Holdings Inc.	0.68	0.68	0.68	0.68	1,000,000
Farmwest Land Inc.	1.36	1.36	1.32	1.32	5,066,000
Highlands Prime Inc.	0.0048	0.0048	0.0048	0.0048	28,000,000
Industries Inc.	0.23	0.23	0.225	0.225	800,000
Kwik Phil Properties	0.57	0.57	0.56	0.56	1,000,000
Phil-Estate Inc.	1.48	1.5	1.48	1.48	2,780,000
Phil-Estate Inc.	0.27	0.27	0.25	0.25	120,560,000
Phil-Estate Inc.	0.27	0.27	0.27	0.27	999,000
Phil-Estate Inc.	0.27	0.27	0.27	0.27	8,530,000
Phil-Estate Inc.	0.27	0.27	0.27	0.27	6,840,000
Phil-Estate Inc.	0.145	0.145	0.14	0.14	830,000
MEDIA					
ABS-CBN Broadcasting Corp.	11.75	11.75	11.75	11.75	8,100
TELECOMMUNICATIONS					
Digital Telecom Phils. Inc.	0.98	0.98	0.98	0.98	1,390,000
Globe Telecom Inc.	880	885	880	880	29,650
Phil. Long Dis. Tel. Co.	2.95	2.95	2.9	2.9	1,459,000
Phil. Long Dis. Tel. Co.	1895	1895	1895	1895	149,220
INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY					
Boulevard Holdings Inc.	0.185	0.185	0.18	0.18	2,630,000
Infosec Inc.	1.34	1.35	1.34	1.35	259,000
Phil. Communications Corp.	0.05	0.05	0.05	0.05	700,000
Philweb Corp.	0.025	0.025	0.024	0.025	20,200,000
TRANSPORTATION SERVICES					
Asian Terminals Inc.	2.24	2.4	2.4	2.4	1,779,000
Int'l Container Term. Sv.	11.25	11.25	11.25	11.25	3,608,000
Lorenzo Shipping Corp.	1.26	1.26	1.26	1.26	2,000
HOTEL & LEISURE					
Acacia Phils. Hotel Corp.	3.4	3.4	3.4	3.4	1,307,000
Leisure & Resorts Corp.	1.82	1.82	1.79	1.79	919,000
Manila Jockey Club	3	3	3	3	20,000
Premiere Ent. Prod. Inc.	0.28	0.28	0.28	0.28	160,000
Waterfront Phils. Inc.	0.44	0.44	0.43	0.43	50,000
EDUCATION					
Far Eastern University	650	650	650	650	100
DIVERSIFIED SERVICES					
MacroAsia Corp.	1.95	2.05	1.95	2.02	3,142,000
Paycom Inc.	8.7	8.8	8.7	8.8	738,000
MINING					
Apex Mining Co. Inc. A	1.22	1.22	1.2	1.2	2,327,000
Apex Mining Co. Inc. B	1.35	1.35	1.3	1.3	2,100
Atlas Mining & Industrial	0.0065	0.0065	0.0065	0.0065	44,000,000
Atlas Cons. Min. & Dev't	6.8	6.8	6.7	6.7	235,000
Benguet Corp. A	28.5	28.5	28.5	28.5	458,000
Benguet Corp. B	0.22	0.22	0.215	0.215	31,500
Lebanon Cons. Min. Co. A	0.26	0.26	0.25	0.25	4,040,000
Lebanon Cons. Min. Co. B	0.26	0.26	0.25	0.25	3,800,000
Manila Mining Corp. A	0.018	0.018	0.018	0.018	31,500,000
Manila Mining Corp. B	0.028	0.028	0.028	0.028	218,000,000
Orinco Corp.	0.0055	0.0055	0.0055	0.0055	44,000,000
Phil. Mining Corp. A	2.65	2.65	2.5	2.5	5,163,000
Phil. Mining Corp. B	2.65	2.65	2.5	2.5	5,750,000
Seminar Mining Corp.	25.5	25.5	25	25.5	529,000
United Paragon Mining Co.	0.3	0.3	0.3	0.3	130,000
DOLLAR					
Basic Consolidated Inc.	0.25	0.25	0.25	0.25	840,000
Oriental Pet. & Min. A	0.0075	0.0075	0.0075	0.0075	232,000,000
Oriental Pet. & Min. B	0.0085	0.0085	0.0085	0.0085	20,000,000
The Philindustrial Corp.	0.5	0.5	0.5	0.5	140,000
Petroenergy Res. Corp.	3.8	3.8	3.8	3.8	17,000
PREFERRED					
PLDT (10% Pref) Series P	10.5	10.5	10.5	10.5	260
PLDT (10% Pref) Series Q	10.5	10.5	10.5	10.5	300
PLDT (10% Pref) Series R	11	11	11	11	3,000
PLDT (10% Pref) Series S	11	11	11	11	800
WARRANTS, PHIL. DEPOSIT RECEIPTS, ETC.					
ABS-CBN Hldgs. Corp. (Pks)	11.75	11.75	11.75	11.75	710,000

RP ...

From page B1

table tax collection for more and more equitable public services," he said.

The official noted that better tax collection would allow deeper fiscal adjustment and additional public services for growth and poverty reduction.

"This could lead to another virtuous circle of tax collection and better government services," Von Amsberg said.

"The rationalization and transparency of public expenditures as well as credible measures against corruption will increase the trust of citizens in the State. Public support for adequate taxation will increase," he added.

Through the passage and enactment of the VAT, he said the Philippines managed to avoid a potential economic crisis and restored market confidence.

"The measures have set in motion a virtuous circle. Government borrowing costs are reduced, and the savings in interest payments have in fact exceeded the additional tax revenues. The gains from interest savings outweigh the pain from additional tax payment," Von Amsberg explained.

For the first time in the history of the Philippine annual donors' meetings, which in previous years usually took the form of a pledging session, this year's meetings were marked by the participation of the country's two highest officials, the President and the Vice President.

"For the time being, market confidence has been restored, and the country has moved away from the very real risk of a serious crisis to a more comfortable situation in which deficit and debt ratios are declining and reduced borrowing costs create the prospect of reversing, in the medium term, the trend of declining spending for public service delivery," Von Amsberg said.

weighed down the blue chips.

The Philippine Stock Exchange composite index slipped 0.94 points to 2,180.64 after moving between 2,175.40 and 2,189.83.

Volume reached 985.24 million shares worth P1.79 billion. Gainers outnumbered losers 50 to 38, while 47 stocks were unchanged.

The broader all-shares gained 7.45 points to 1,065.10. Philippine officials announced

earlier that the country's economic growth target for 2006 has been scaled down to 5.5-6.2 percent from a 5.7-6.3 percent range.

"The slower economic growth target and the Fed's indication that more interest rates will be forthcoming gave investors an excuse to take profit after a good rally last week," said Jonathan Ravelas of Banco de Oro Universal Bank.

AFP

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New York Life unit in RP sees 30% jump in sales this year

By Elizabeth L. Sanchez

NEW YORK LIFE INSURANCE Philippines Inc., a subsidiary of the American insurance giant, sees sales swelling 30 percent this year boosted mainly by its dollar products.

NYLIP president George May said that with the peso's strength, it would be cheaper for consumers to avail themselves of dollar-based insurance products.

May said he remained bullish on the Philippine market, adding that he expected a "banner year" this year with the current pace of economic growth.

He admitted that last year was a tough year for both life insurers and pre-need firms owing to the reported scandals that rocked firms which sold open-ended education plans.

In order to motivate more Filipinos to save, NYLIP yesterday launched new products—NYL Big Apple Advantage—a two-in-one investment and life insurance plan. For a minimum investment of \$400 to \$500 (P15,000 to P20,000) in regular premiums, one can invest in four types of funds.

NYLIP's peso fixed income fund yields around 18.8 percent to date from investment in government bonds and commercial papers. Its Philippine Equity Fund will be placed in blue-chip stocks and may generate a return of 14 percent. A dollar fixed-in-

come fund is invested in fixed income instruments issued by the Philippine government and may yield roughly 14.6 percent for the investor. A managed fund—or a combination of fixed income instruments and equity—can gener-



ate returns of up to 18 percent. Allied Bank Corp. of Taiwan Licio Tan owns 25 percent in NYLIP. Their alliance was formed three years ago to take advantage of

bancassurance efforts. NYLIP runs several offices in Metro Manila,

Batangas, Pampanga, Dagupan, and Cagayan de Oro. It has more than 1,000 licensed agents.

PRULINK	PRU LIFE UK	
Investments of Variable Life Insurance Contracts	Current Week Mar. 28, 2006	Last Week Mar. 21, 2006
Bond Fund - Peso	1.44675	1.42399
Managed Fund - Peso	1.56602	1.54586
Growth Fund - Peso	1.18355	1.17891
Bond Fund - US Dollar	1.2481	1.2471

Note: These investments of variable life insurance contracts are not mutual funds. Life insurance products are regulated by the Insurance Commission.

Investment Funds of	UNIT PRICES (in Php)	
 and 	March 27, 2006	March 20, 2006
Fixed Income Fund	1.152685	1.143952
Balanced Fund	1.143612	1.131318
Equity Fund	1.124576	1.103936

These investment funds are specific to variable life insurance contracts and are not considered mutual funds. Life insurance products are regulated by the Insurance Commission. The weekly unit prices are also available at www.nycoflife.com.ph.

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Anacleto A. de los Reyes

(Tiya Cleto)

of Obando, Bulacan

has peacefully joined her Creator on March 28, 2006.

Her children, Director Ting of the Department of Tourism, Noemi and Dan Fumzal, Reimbrando and Flor, Raul and Nenet; her grandchildren, Margarita, Isabelle, Jo-Ann, Liberty, Bea, JT, Nene, Rafael and Cheenee; her brother, Sendoy, her brother-in-law, Rufino, and sisters-in-law, Elena, Angelina, Julita and Cely, other relatives and friends request the pious readers to pray for the eternal repose of her soul.

Her remains lie in state at the family residence in Paliwas, Obando, Bulacan. Interment will be on Sunday, April 2, 2006 after a Requiem Mass at the Obando Catholic Church at 3:00 o'clock in the afternoon.

*"The Lord is my Shepherd I shall not want;
He makes me lie down in green pastures;
He leads me beside still waters; He restores my soul."*

Bernarda Santiago Torres

"Betty"

of Fernando Air Base, Lipa City and Calumpit, Bulacan

peacefully joined our Creator on March 30, 2006 at the age of 85

Her bereaved family, parents Norberto (†) and Damiana (†); brothers and sister Gabino (†) and Eufracia (†); Simeon (†) and Narcisa (†), Ramon (†) and Lydia, Marciano (†) and Catalina (†) Mesina, Castor (†) and Leonora Baltazar, Adriano (†) and Luz (†) Cruz; nephews, nieces and grandchildren request the readers to pray for the eternal repose of her soul.

Her remains lie in state at the Miraculous Medal Mortuary, Fernando Air Base, Lipa City and will be transferred to the St. John the Baptist Church, Calumpit, Bulacan on March 31, 2006.

She will be laid to rest at the family mausoleum located at the Calumpit Catholic Cemetery on Saturday, April 1, 2006 after the 3:00 p.m. Mass.

"Our Lord God has you in His Keeping, we have you in our hearts."

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Message of Thanks

We, the family of the late

Filemon S. Padiernos

of Gapan, Nueva Ecija

wish to convey our deepest appreciation to our relatives and friends, who spent precious time with us, sent flowers, mass cards, gave donations, or in some other ways have expressed their love, concern, and support in celebrating Filemon's coming to his Creator and Savior.

*Into your hands, I commit my spirit,
redeem me O Lord, the God of Salvation.
Psalms 31:5*

Our Dearly Beloved

PAYAPA TECSON LIGON

Peacefully joined our Lord and her husband Virgilio V. Ligon on March 30, 2006 at the age of 92

Her children Vilma, Linda & Vic, Roland (†) & Becky, Roy, Gerry & Cellie, Julie & Dedo, Baby & Charlie, Arlene & Vicot, Jasmine & Mario, grandchildren, relatives and friends request the pious readers to pray for the eternal repose of her soul.

Her remains lie in state at Santuario de San Antonio Parish, Capilla de San Francisco, Forbes Park, Makati City

Interment will be on April 4, 2006 at Loyola Memorial Park, Sucat, Parañaque after the 9:00 a.m. Mass

MARIANO RIEGO

RIVERAL

of Ilocos Sur

Died in the Grace of our Lord on March 29, 2006 at the age of 91.

Funeral Mass will be on April 2, 2006 at 9:30 a.m. at La Funeraria Paz, Araneta Ave., Quezon City.

Interment will follow at Himilayang Pilipino immediately after the mass.

JUANITA ANGPAÑ GOCHIAN

Peacefully joined our Lord on March 26, 2006 at the age of 67

Her loving husband Jose, children Jose Jr., Josephine (†), Jean, Jocelyn, Jimmy & Julie; in-laws & grandchildren request the pious readers to pray for the eternal repose of her soul.

Her remains lie in state at La Funeraria Paz-Recto, Chapel 2

Interment will be on Tuesday, April 4, 2006 at Chinese Cemetery

"...absent from the body to be present with the Lord."

— 2 Corinthians 5:8

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GUIA ESTRELLA

REYES ECHIVERRI

Peacefully joined her Creator on March 29, 2006 at the age of 53.

Her loving husband Engr. Mark, daughter Guialou, brothers and sisters, and in-laws request the pious readers to pray for the eternal repose of her soul.

Her body lies in state at Loyola Memorial Chapels, Guadalupe, Makati City.

Interment will be on April 5, 2006 at Manila Memorial Park, Parañaque after the 9:30 a.m. Mass at Saint Andrew Apostle Parish, Bel-Air, Makati City.

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Online gaming firm expands

By Daxim L. Lucas

ONLINE GAME DISTRIBUTOR DIGITAL MEDIA Exchange Inc. (DME) is set to double its authorized capital following its expansion into online payment services.

The new capital will reach as high as \$5 million courtesy of the company's partners like the Japan Asia Investment Corp. (JAIC), the third-biggest venture capital firm in Japan, California Pacific Capital, and a yet unnamed Taiwanese entrepreneur.

"The investment is expected to help the company capture a significant share of the estimated \$3.5 billion e-commerce market in the Philippines," DME president Jojo A. Añonuevo said in a briefing.

DME is a local pioneer in the field of interactive digital entertainment and manages popular online games.

Through a new division called Mobius Online, the P50-million company will enable 3.5 million Mobius gaming subscribers to pay for products and services such as prepaid cell phone cards, Internet cards, landline phone cards, VoIP (voice over Internet protocol) credits and game cards over the site.

The subscribers use Mobius Online currency called ePoints to pay for game time and load up their various game accounts. DME hosts three of the most popular "massively multiplayer online games" in the country: the epic MU Online role-playing game; the casual shooting game Gunbound; and an interactive online community called GoPets.

The universal online currency of ePoints replaces the old system of using credit cards, prepaid cards and different denominations for paying for Mobius products and services.

DME allocated a large percentage of the investment to creating a scalable but cost-effective payment platform. The company partnered with Seer Technologies to create a system to handle as much as 100,000 transactions a day.

Añonuevo said the company planned to grow the business in several areas. The company expects to grow its human resources from its current 150 personnel to 300 deployed all over its Southeast Asian operations by year's end.

Its Internet games division Mobius.ph continues to attract new subscribers and will be licensing more content. Meantime, the 6-month-old Mobius Online will also be expanding its product and service offerings.

"With the exception of DVD titles, the products we offer are all virtual," Añonuevo said. "However, talks are ongoing with fast food companies. Before long, our members will be able to order their food online."

MacroAsia up on mining news

SHARES OF MACROASIA CORP YESTERDAY surged on news that the company was holding talks with major Canadian, Chinese and Japanese mining firms on a possible joint exploration of its mining site in Palawan.

Owned by business tycoon Lucio Tan, publicly listed MacroAsia is primarily engaged in aviation-related services, but the firm inherited its mining rights from Coberton Holdings Corp., formerly Infanta Mineral & Industrial Corp.

In a March 28 disclosure, MacroAsia told the Philippine Stock Exchange that it obtained a Mineral Production Sharing Agreement (MPSA) from the Mines and Geosciences Bureau covering 1,114 hectares of land in Brookes Point, Palawan.

"With this MPSA, MacroAsia shall have the exclusive right to conduct mining operations within, but not title over, the contracted area. Mining operations that are allowed include exploration, development and utilization for commercial purposes of nickel, chromite, iron and other associated mineral deposits that may be found in the area," the firm said.

The MPSA has a term not exceeding 25 years from date of issuance and is renewable for another 25 years under the same terms and conditions as the original agreement.

MacroAsia president Joseph Chua said several mining firms from Canada, China and Japan have approached the company for a possible joint exploration of its Palawan mine site.

ABS-CBN . . . From page B1

2005] compared to [2004], while operating costs, though controlled, maintained its growth," ABS-CBN said in a statement.

More importantly, the company will likely muddle through this year once more since boosting revenues by raising advertising rates is no longer possible after it lost its lead to GMA Network.

"We have not increased our rates for this year," ABS-CBN chief financial officer Randolph Estrella said during the briefing. "If we are to be more competitive, given where we are today in terms of ratings, it wouldn't make sense to increase rates."

In contrast, GMA Network chair and CEO Felipe Gozon disclosed last week that they intended to raise advertising rates as most of its TV programs were already overloaded in terms of advertising minutes.

ABS-CBN's gross revenues rose by 8 percent to P17 billion in 2005, driven by license fees from DirecTV and the continued growth of ABS-CBN Global revenues.

However, gross revenues declined by 7 percent to P10.3 billion as its so-called "Mega Manila" channel 2 households ratings declined further to 14 percent in 2005 from 16 percent in 2004.

PUMPING FRESH MONEY INTO A CASH-strapped company ought to be a good thing, but that is not how stock punters have so far viewed the complicated restructuring plan of Metro Pacific Corp.

MPC lost nearly 18 percent of its value Wednesday when the stock resumed trading after a one-day halt.

Yesterday, MPC continued its losing streak, closing at 26 centavos, nine centavos, or 26 percent, down from its pre-halt closing, despite the assurance that MPC's new partner, the London-based Ashmore Investment Management Ltd., holds nearly \$17 billion in emerging market debts and equities.

On a much longer timeline, MPC already shed nearly half of its shareholder value from its 52-week high of 49 centavos.

Yesterday, the normally glib MPC spokesman, David Nugent, was stumped for an explanation, attributing the continuing price slide to "misunderstanding" of the contemplated reverse stock split and eventual swapping of MPC shares into a new Metro Pacific Investments Corp.

"There are many people who don't

COCKTALES

Victor C. Agustin



like what they don't readily understand," Nugent said.

Given the continuing jitters, expect MPC chair Manuel V. Pangilinan and his "Thinking Ahead" cavalry to hold a series of investors' briefings. MVP's probable spell: He would turn around MPC just like what he did to PLDT. But, in the absence of a clear revenue driver, the question is, how?

Mike boys test SEC

THE ORDER of no-nonsense SEC Chair Fe Barin was clear: Philcomsat Holdings Corp. must hold its annual stockholders' meeting "not later than April 17."

Instead, the Malacañang nominees led by Free Press publisher and grand mason Enrique Locsin, Mike Arroyo cousin Benito "Bombay" Araneta and Mike Arroyo's

90-year-old uncle Manuel Nieto Jr. are calling for a "special" stockholders' meeting on April 18, a day past the deadline.

And instead of a board election, the agenda is limited to one item: the amendment of the articles of incorporation to extend the life of the corporation. But there is catch.

The stockholders' notice sent out by PHC assistant corporate secretary Delfin Angcao—the previous corsec had been suspended for chicanery by the Supreme Court no less—still refuses to recognize the Supreme Court decision that the combined government and Nieto blocks no longer represent the majority ownership of the listed company.

With the desired amendment, the present oversteering board of PHC—Araneta had already been ordered replaced by then President Estrada after the private shareholders complained that P390 million of intra-company funds had been funneled into another company controlled by another cousin, Antonio Araneta—shall have obtained a new mandate.

In other words, while the political pot is

bubbling on Malacañang-endorsed Charter change, the Mike boys are brewing their version of corporate cha-cha. Both have the same aim—prolong the tenure.

Money-go-round

• AFTER dumping 90 million ICTSI shares at an average of P12.25/share in late January, port services king Enrique Razon Jr. was back in the market early this week, scooping up 32.6 million ICTSI shares at P11.25 each.

• TWENTY strategic planners of multinational ad agency DDB are today concluding a regional meeting at the Cebu Waterfront Hotel, their conference hopefully not spoiled by the unseasonal summer rains.

Heard through the grapevine

ECONOMIC Planning Secretary Romulo Neri is an approachable chap, but to those who could not reach him, the go-to-guy that has more than his ears is a certain Neda consultant by the name of "Jim" Lozada.

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Scientists race to save Abaca

Transco set to bid out 6 contested projects

By Abigail L. Ho

LOCAL CONTRACTOR ALPHAOmega Integrated Corp. will be seeking international arbitration for the case involving the National Transmission Corp.'s (Transco) takeover of P93.5 million worth of projects that the contractor has allegedly left unfinished.

Transco vice president and legal counsel Noel de Leon said AlphaOmega would justify before the arbitrator its leaving six Transco projects unfinished.

"What they are saying is that they incurred losses as a result of what they perceived as an unreasonable delay (in the fulfillment of Transco's part in the contracts). That's one of the issues that will be resolved," he told reporters.

Transco recently took over the construction of three of the six power transmission facilities that were being constructed by AlphaOmega, following the contractor's failure to complete the projects within the contract period.

The state firm is now preparing to take over the remaining three projects.

Transco president and chief executive Alan Ortiz had earlier said that the takeover decision had to be made as AlphaOmega had stopped all construction activities since December 2005.

All six projects were supposed to have been completed last year, he said.

But AlphaOmega president and general manager Edgar Herrera said the contractor was not the only one to blame for the work stoppage, saying Transco was also unable to fulfill its obligations under the contracts.

"Right of way problems and Transco's failure to furnish materials on time caused all the problems," he said.

Experts turn to genetics as diseases threaten country's top export draw

By Christine A. Gaytan

GOVERNMENT AGRICULTURISTS ARE now racing against time to save the country's abaca fiber industry that is now under threat from three major diseases.

The experts are now trying to develop a genetically modified abaca fiber, stepping up their research which, according to the scientists, may be the best and only hope to solve the problems now threatening the country's endemic crop.

Abaca is still a major dollar earner, with the Philippines providing 85 percent of the world supply, according to the Fiber Industry Development Authority (Fida).

Government efforts to control the spread of the diseases—abaca mosaic, abaca bunchy-top virus and abaca bract mosaic—through Fida's Oplan Abaca Program are bound to fail, Fida administrator Cecilia Gloria Soriano said.

She noted that the diseases have spread like wildfire in different abaca plantations.

According to Soriano, the abaca industry's only hope lies in modern biotechnology, in particular, the development of a disease-resistant breed of plants.

The industry needs to maintain high production output if it aims to keep its share in the world market, Soriano said.

She cited massive infection in at least three abaca-producing regions, which she feared would affect the country's export revenues.

In 2002, at least 7,774.35 hectares of abaca plantation, including those in the Bicol region, Eastern Visayas and Caraga, were affected by the diseases. The following year, 23,000 hectares were affected.

"We in Fida believe that the only permanent method to control the disease is by developing GMA (genetically-modified abaca)," according to Josephine Regalado, chief of the Fida crop research division.

Through modern biotechnology, she said, they would easily determine and detect diseases, thus preventing them from infecting and spreading into the open fields.

The demand for abaca and its products, including raw fiber, cordage, pulp, fibercraft, materials for cosmetic industry, and fiber composites in car manufacture, remains high.

Exports of abaca fibers generate average annual earnings of US\$76 million or P4.2 billion.

An estimated 1.5 million Filipinos depend on abaca for a living. As of 2004, Fida reported that there are 77,526 farmers, cultivating a total area of 127,258 hectares of abaca.

Soriano said Fida's task is to distribute disease-free planting materials.

According to Regalado, they are now working on producing clean, high-yielding and disease-free planting materials.

She said they are currently using biotechnology techniques in disease "indexing" to detect and determine diseases that affect planting materials.

"We have to fiercely attack the disease, or else we will lose all our abaca," Regalado warned.



SAY CHINESE TAKEOUT IN ARABIC
CHOWKING Food Corp. stepped up its global expansion with the recent opening of a fifth store in the United Arab Emirates, boosting its international presence to 17 stores. Chowking is a member of the Jollibee Group, the largest fast-food chain in the Philippines. The group has a combined network of more than 1,300 stores worldwide.

Gov't urged to give up grant of cement incentives

By Michelle V. Remo

THE COUNTRY'S CEMENT MANUFACTURERS have asked government to abandon the plan to grant fiscal incentives to new investors in the cement industry.

The Cement Manufacturers Association of the Philippines (Cemap), said that attracting more investors to the cement industry would aggravate the problem of under-utilization of production capacity among existing players.

Some of the members of Cemap used to enjoy fiscal incentives.

Ernesto Ordoñez, Cemap president, said in a position paper that current capacity utilization rate is estimated at 50 percent, leaving cement firms unable to meet their expected return on investments.

RFM settles 4-year strike at Swift plant

By Elizabeth L. Sanchez

THE MANAGEMENT of RFM CORP HAS reached a settlement with workers who staged a labor strike at Swift Foods Inc.'s meat packaging plant in Cabuyao, Laguna.

The settlement ended a four-year protracted standoff, RFM president Jose A. Concepcion III told reporters yesterday.

Swift's labor union has around 320 members.

However, Concepcion did not say when the RFM Group intends to resume operations at the plant.

Concepcion also said that there are options being considered for the five-hectare property where the meat plant now stands. The options include redeveloping the property, and sale or lease of the property to other operators.

This year, RFM Corp. has also earmarked P17 million for the improvement of its flour mill on Pioneer Street in Mandaluyong.

RFM continued its recovery in the first nine months of 2005, saying it had hit P68 million, a 45 percent increase from last year. RFM reported net sales of P4.49 billion for the first three quarters, an increase of 11 percent from P4.06 billion in the same period in 2004.

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Henry Butcher

Air Philippines launches P1 fare

AIR PHILIPPINES, WHICH WANTS TO BE the country's leading low cost carrier, has launched its P1 fare program.

The offering is expected to boost travel during the traditional low season and support the airline's campaign to increase domestic tourism.

The one peso, one way fare program covers flights to any of Air Philippines' destinations and does not include taxes and other surcharges.

Selling period is from April 1 to 15 for travel starting June 16 to Oct. 15, 2006. Seats under the P1 fare program are on book and buy basis. Tickets are issued only upon confirmation of booking.

Air Philippines advised passengers wanting to avail themselves of the promotion to buy their tickets early to ensure the availability of their seats.

Air Philippines' offer comes at the heels of rival Cebu Pacific's announcement of its own P1 fare program.

Cebu Pacific's one-peso fare program started the other day and would run until April 2 or until the seats are sold out.

There are more than 50,000 seats available for this promo, extended on a first-come, first-served basis, exclusive of taxes and surcharges.

"We are the country's low fare leader and we will always have the lowest fares to any destination we fly to," Cebu Pacific general manager Bong Mojica said in a statement. "It's all about making flying more affordable to more people And now that we're giving out our seats practically for free, almost anyone can fly."

He added that the airline was encouraged by the success of its previous promo, which was launched to coincide with its 10th anniversary celebrations.

Jewelry companies gain foothold in Europe—DTI

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People, Events & Products

Vaseline campaign makes mothers glow inside

MEDIA MOMS RECEIVED A GLOWING tribute at the launch of Vaseline's latest campaign held recently at the Hotel Intercontinental Manila. Unilever's premier family shampoo brand ushered in graduation season with "Glowing Inside," which recognizes a mom's unsung role in her children's education.

"Vaseline goes beyond being a mother's partner in maintaining her family's healthy hair by creating initiatives that strengthen the close personal ties between a mother and her children," says brand manager Joy dela Rosa. Hosted by celebrity mom Chiqui Roa, the intimate affair was a celebration of mother-child bonding moments, culminating in milestone occasions like graduation. "Moms of-

ten stay away from the limelight during these moments, and this is precisely why we should go out of our way to let them know that we appreciate everything that they've done for us," Dela Rosa adds.

A key component of the campaign is the "Glowing Inside" anthem written by Louie Ocampo and Edith Galardo, and interpreted by fast-rising pop star Nikki Gil, who credits her mom Julie's guidance for her successful balance of schoolwork and show business. Gil proudly shared her fondest memories of her mother, and even surprised her with a classic silver locket bearing their pictures.

To make the event more meaningful for the attendees, Vaseline presented guests with surprise messages from

their children. Nary a dry eye was left in the audience as they watched tribute videos and read thank-you letters that their children made especially for the event. And to sustain the sentimental mood, Gil returned to the stage to deliver a heartfelt performance of "Glowing Inside," leaving the guests all aglow at the end of the day.

The Vaseline "Glowing Inside" campaign also includes a nationwide search for the most creative performance of the anthem during a graduation ceremony, as well as an exciting promo that will surely make learning enjoyable for moms and kids alike. So take part in the "Glowing Inside" campaign and give your mothers the inner glow of love and affection that goes beyond this graduation season.



NIKKI Gil with Unilever officials and composers

Tourism department creates first computerized jobs databank

THE DEPARTMENT OF TOURISM (DOT) is setting up a high-tech hiring system and info-technology infrastructure for the Tourism Jobs Fair, which will be staged in Cebu City on April 4 and 5, Davao City from April 4 to 6, and Manila from April 6 to 8.

Intended exclusively for the travel and tourism industry, the fair constitutes the initial phase of the DOT's "TourismJOBS (Jobs, Opportunities, Business)" program, which is designed to address the dearth of qualified talents to fill up job openings in tourism, the need for improvement of the

current BS Tourism curriculum to meet the actual needs of tourism enterprises, and the absence of continuing skills training to upgrade the competence of the labor force.

The event will go beyond the usual concept of jobs fairs by serving as DOT's one-stop venue for employers, academe and

the labor sector to assess each other's needs and create an employment match.

The TourismJOBS Program Secretariat (525-1153, 525-9318 local 229/230/231) is urging employers, schools, and applicants for various tourism-related jobs to register online (www.tourismjobs.ph)

The website is available all year round. It will continue to gather vacancy postings from tourism industry employers and applications from jobseekers even after the fair. Employers and applicants who have already registered may continue to access their profiles for updates, see new vacancy listings, and post new job slots.

During online or onsite registration, a unique identification number (UIN) will be issued to every applicant. The UIN will appear on the webpage upon the applicant's completion of the registration procedure. The UIN will enable the applicant to access the list of job vacancies in the databank.

SM Mall and PLDT are likewise supporting DOT by accommodating the TourismJOBS Information Kiosk. SM will provide a space for DOT for the kiosk while PLDT will provide free hookup/connections to the Internet lines.

Hyundai Motor Co donates 8 buses to PMA

HYUNDAI MOTOR COMPANY, in cooperation with its sole Philippine distributor, Hyundai Asia Resources Inc (HARI), donated eight 45-seater buses to the Philippine Military Academy Dec. 15, 2005.

As a symbol of Hyundai's pledge of support to the Philippine government, HARI delivered these buses on Saturday, Mar. 25, during PMA's graduation ceremony.

Through the efforts of HARI executive vice president and COO Fe Agudo, the turnover served as an embodiment of Hyundai's sincere commitment of service to humanity and its partner-

ship with the Republic of Korea in strengthening diplomatic ties with the Philippines.

The ceremonial turnover was graced by Korean Ambassador Hong Jong Ki, defense attaché to Korea Col. Lim, Hyundai Malaysia general manager Hyun Guk Ko, and Hyundai Motor Company's Engineer Yoo Ki Yeong.

The buses were accepted by PMA Superintendent Brigadier General Leopoldo Maligalig as an acknowledgement of Hyundai Motor Company's support for the Philippine Military Academy.

ProductFILES

Watches for men by Time Depot

TICKER TRENDS FOR MEN emphasize size and complication, which add "immense drama to the wrists" and are "ideal for daytime since they look serious," says one fashion editor. Time Depot, a one-stop watch specialty store, features the latest fads in watches.

Some of the vogue timepieces for men include: Marc Ecco, wristwatch designed with elegant urban touch and ultra cool and unique lines and curves for the funky and stylish trendsetter, who adores being surrounded by chicks. Marc Ecco designs range from wide cuff link leather styles to stainless steel models for edgy looks.

The ruggedly sleek Nautica reflects upscale, functional style and has a high-tech look in a comfortable

casual setting. Most Nautica watches are lightweight and durable, ideal for establishing good impressions at work or with girls.

The toughest watch in the world, Casio G-Shock, comes with precious inner components that control all its functions. Complete with technical precision and designed to absorb shock, this watch is for men who combine fun with adventure. Check out Time Depot's wristwatch collections located in Rockwell (Makati), Robinsons Place (Manila), Shangri-La Plaza Mall (Mandaluyong City), Festival Supermall (Alabang, Muntinlupa); Eastwood Citiwalk 2 (Libis, Quezon City); and SM branches in North Edsa Annex, Fairview and Pampanga. Other watch brands for men available at

Time Depot include Alfex, Saunto, Calvin Klein and Casio



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Gov't OKs P8.15-B Transco line

COTABATO CITY—THE GOVERNMENT has recently approved the disbursement of some P8.15 billion in funds for the transmission line expansion program of the National Transmission Corp. (Transco), which would benefit indigenous people in Mindanao.

Jonathan Moderno, Transco management and maintenance division head, said the project provides for the expansion of Transco's lines covering lumad communities from General Santos to Tacurong City in Sultan Kudarat.

Alan Ortiz, Transco chief executive officer, said recently that the project, which is under the Mindanao Backbone Transmission Project, would cover about 660 circuit-kilometers of transmission lines.

Ortiz said the project will serve as a reliable electricity highway that would transmit increased power from the power generation plants in northern Mindanao to major electricity consumers across the island.

Ortiz said a steady and reliable power supply in Mindanao is very important, especially with the island's flourishing trade with its partners in the East Asian Growth Area.

Eaga groups the Philippines, Indonesia, Malaysia and Brunei. **Jeffrey Maitem, PDI Mindanao Bureau**

VAT from e-load, export overruns eyed

Agumil to invest P300M in palm oil plant

By Christine A. Gaylican

PALM OIL PRODUCER AGUMIL PLANTATIONS Inc. plans to expand its operations and build a new P300-million facility in Maguindanao.

According to a proposal submitted to the Land Bank of the Philippines, Agumil planned to build its new facility in the town of Buluan and was seeking financial backing from the bank.

Agumil has a facility in Agusan del Sur.

Agumil Philippines Inc. is a joint venture between Filipino and Malaysian investors, and is engaged in the processing of palm oil.

"Agumil is seeking a P200-million loan from the bank to build a similar facility in Maguindanao," said Land Bank first vice president and head of the Mindanao Branches Group Wilfredo C. Maldia in an interview with the INQUIRER.

The Agumil plantation in Trento, Agusan del Sur, has a capacity to manufacture 20 tons of palm oil.

The proposed plantation and facility in Maguindanao targets to cover 8,000 hectares in Agusan and benefit 4,000 farmers.

Earlier, Agumil also availed of a P100-million production loan from the bank for its plant in Agusan.

Philippine vegetable oil millers and refiners are now keen on selling the cheaper palm olein oil for the domestic market, so that all coconut oil would be exported.

Coconut oil now commands a higher premium in the international market. Since the middle of last year, cooking oil manufacturers have increased imports of the cheap palm olein oil by 90 percent.

Palm oil costs around P10 to P15 a kilo, industry players said in separate interviews yesterday.

"The use of the palm olein oil has gained inroads in the local market as household consumers and institutional buyers have preferred it because of the price difference compared with edible coconut oil," said San Miguel Corp.'s assistant vice president Greg Illesca.

Illesca noted in an interview that there was not much difference between the quality and taste of the two vegetable oils.

Illesca cited that institutional buyers, including fast-food giant Jollibee

Foods Corp., have switched to palm olein oil for their business.

This development has actually alarmed some local edible oil producers who currently use 100-percent coconut oil as raw material.

The producer of the Minola Cooking oil, in particular, which is under the Coconut Industry Investment Fund (CIIF) Group, may lose some sales as its products are priced higher than those products with part palm olein oil in its content.

For the long term, the said development will not totally displace the country's coconut oil production as the agricultural commodity would instead be directed for exports, said industry trader Raul V. Ostrea in another interview.

Coconut oil is the country's oldest agricultural export.

"Coconut oil is now \$30 cheaper than its direct substitute palm kernel oil and this has driven higher demand from foreign buyers," he said.

China, in particular, is seeking big volumes of coconut oil, which is used as raw material for the production of soaps, cosmetics and detergents, among others.

BAGUIO CITY—OFFICIALS OF THE Bureau of Internal Revenue have just realized that there's more gold to be taken from the neighborhood e-load (electronic mobile phone load credits) retailers.

Deputy BIR Commissioner Lucita Rodriguez said the government has started negotiating terms with the country's two largest telecommunications firms to enable the government to monitor revenues generated from electronically distributed telephone credits as it tries to plug leaks in the revised value-added tax system.

Rodriguez recently spoke to government workers in northern Luzon during the last leg of a nationwide RVAT information caravan.

She said the BIR had failed to unearth the revenues earned by e-load distributors or even from bank transactions conducted through the Internet.

Incentives that exempted industry giants Smart Communications Inc. and Globe Telecom from VAT have expired this year.

Meanwhile, Tereso Panga, manager of the Baguio City Economic Zone, told Rodriguez that there might also be potential tax revenues from materials imported through ports administered by the Philippine Economic Zone Authority, that find their way into the domestic market.

Lenny Sanedrin, an accountant of the National Food Authority in the Ilocos, also asked BIR to devise a new collection system to capture both VAT and non-VAT covered rice truckers that distribute NFA rice to the provinces.

She said this industry could also be the source of tax leakages.

"Finance Secretary Margarito Teves is putting in place a very strict and very precise monitoring of collections from RVAT. Every detail—how much we get from petroleum dealers, how much we get from oil monthly, there's going to be monitoring," said Albay Rep. Jose Salceda, chair of the House committee on appropriations. **Vincent Cabres, PDI Northern Luzon Bureau**

Negros farmers desperately seeking buyers of peanuts

DUMAGUETE CITY—TONS OF PEANUTS have been harvested in Oriental Negros but farmers have been unable to sell them.

Provincial agriculturist Gregorio Paltinca said the farmers in the province have yet to find a buyer for some 100,000 tons of peanuts harvested over the last few weeks.

Paltinca said the provincial govern-

ment bought from the farmers some 10,000 tons at P20 a kilo of dried and unshelled peanuts to protect them from private traders who offered then to buy the peanuts at only P14 a kilo.

Paltinca said the provincial government was even looking at buying the peanut at a higher price to help the farmers while it helps them look for markets.

Paltinca said the provincial agriculture office had found a buyer in Tagbilaran City in Bohol.

But the buyer, who is engaged in the production of peanut kisses, (peanut brittle), a Bohol delicacy, only needed a ton of dry and shelled peanuts.

Paltinca said the businessman bought the shelled peanuts at P45 a kilo.

Oriental Negros' peanut supply soared when the provincial government initiated a program to increase peanut production in July 2005.

Paltinca said the provincial government had allocated P1 million for the seeds and fertilizers that were available to the farmers through the plant-now-pay-later scheme. **Romy G. Amarado, PDI Visayas Bureau**

Acer's Dual Core Laptops at the 37th BPI Installment Madness

For today's increasingly changing mobile Filipino lifestyle, owning a notebook PC that's both fast and powerful enough to allow multi-tasking while showing crisp, quality images and audio-video streaming could very well be worth an arm and a leg. Not anymore!

Acer, the first brand worldwide and in the Philippines to introduce its newest laptops powered by the all-new Intel® Centrino® Duo Mobile Technology has now invaded the one of the biggest installment madness event in the country — the BPI Real 0% No Sweat Installment Madness.

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As one of the world's leading computer brand, Acer empowers more Filipinos to do more and be more with their laptops. Coupled with its dual core processors, Acer's latest laptop offerings are seen to pave the way for ultra-fast processing, enhanced multi-tasking, extended connectivity, and power-saving features that prolong battery life. This way, users are empowered to communicate anytime, anywhere!

One important benefit of Acer's latest line of laptops is product availability to offer complete voice and video communication solutions. Now featuring extended connectivity options, these notebook PCs also target a broad range of user needs — from top-of-line performance models with 15.4-inch wide screens that can effectively serve as desktop PCs, to 14.1-inch display lightweight models for corridor warriors, and 12.1-inch ultra portable models for road warriors.

A number of these laptop models also feature Acer Video Conference, a complete solution comprised of Acer Orbicam and Acer Bluetooth® VoIP phone. The Acer Orbicam is an integrated camera with 1.3 mega pixel high-resolution CMOS and 225° ergonomic rotation, so users can capture visuals on both sides of the display without adjusting the LCD.

Acer's Bluetooth® VoIP phone, on the other hand, enables hands-free communication and additional interaction points for multiple-users, while its Acer Video Conference provides a complete voice and video communication solution that is both intuitive and cost-effective.

What's more, every purchase of Aspire 5562WXML and TravelMate 3282WXML comes with a specially-priced PLDT WeRoom Aircard at P9,999 to fully enjoy the wireless capabilities of the Acer dual core laptops for unlimited wireless internet access for three (3) months. This package also provides reloading options for additional WeRoom credits via SMART money at the end of the subscription period.

Moreover, other Acer products available at 0% interest installment purchase are: Aspire 5502WXML - P59,900 (P4,991.66/mo. x 12 mos.); Aspire 5502WXML - P69,900 (P5,825/mo. x 12 mos.); Aspire 5512WXML - P89,900 (P7,491.66/mo. x 12 mos.); TravelMate 3212WXML - P69,900 (P5,825/mo. x 12 mos.); TravelMate 3002WTML - P99,900 (P8,325/mo. x 12 mos.); TravelMate C202Tm Tablet PC - P125,000 (P10,416.66/mo. x 12 mos.); TravelMate C312Tm Tablet PC - P125,000 (P10,416.66/mo. x 12 mos.); TravelMate 3212WXML - P69,900 (P5,825/mo. x 12 mos.); Aspire 3623NWXCL and TravelMate 2423NWXCL both at P39,900 (P3,325/mo. x 6 mos.); Ferrari 4005WXML - P128,000 (P10,666.67/mo. x 12 mos.); Ferrari 4005WXML - P138,000 (P11,500/mo. x 12 mos.); and Acer PD100 DLP Projector at P59,900 (P4,991.67/mo. x 12 mos.).

So, what are you waiting for? Check out these sizzling product offerings at the Acer Micro, Comlink, Electroworld, Octagon, Silicon Valley, TCA and Villman display booths located at the Glonetta, Ayala Center or its branches nationwide until April 2, 2006.

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- 1GB DDR2 533 RAM/100GB SATA HDD with Acer GreenSense and Anti-Theft Technology and DASH (Extended Power)
- 12.1" WXGA TFT Color LCD and Dual Display via Acer GridVista (Wide Screen)
- 5-in-1 Card Reader (SD, MMC, MS, MS-Pro, XD Picture Card)
- HyperMemory Technology
- Carbon Fiber Casing
- Acer GreenSense and Anti-Theft HDD Protection Technologies
- Weight: 1.5kg



TravelMate 3282WXML

SRP: Php 89,900

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- 5-in-1 Card Reader (SD, MMC, MS, MS-Pro, XD Picture Card)
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- Carbon Fiber Casing
- Acer GreenSense and Anti-Theft HDD Protection Technologies
- Weight: 2.5kg



TravelMate 3242WXML

SRP: Php 79,900

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- 1GB DDR2 533 RAM/100GB SATA HDD with Acer GreenSense and Anti-Theft Technology and DASH (Extended Power)
- 12.1" WXGA TFT Color LCD and Dual Display via Acer GridVista (Wide Screen)
- 5-in-1 Card Reader (SD, MMC, MS, MS-Pro, XD Picture Card)
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Ecozones' earnings down 10% in 2005

Peza remits P911M to national treasury

By Ronnel W. Domingo

ECONOMIC ZONE EARNINGS REMITTED to the national treasury reached about P911 million in 2005, or some 10 percent lower than the P1 billion turned over the previous year.

According to the Philippine Economic Zone Authority, the amount accounted for payment of loans, dividends and income taxes collected from various ecozones nationwide.

There are 81 operating ecozones in the country, including the four public ecozones, privately-run special ecozones and information technology parks and buildings.

Peza Director General Lilia de Lima announced the figures yesterday during recognition rites for outstanding investors held at the Hotel Philippine Plaza.

However, the Peza office was not able to say why remittances decreased last year.

Yesterday's awardees included best earning exporters Panasonic Communications Philippines Corp., Philips Semiconductors Philippines Inc., Rohm Electronics Philippines Inc., and Samsung Electronics Philippines Manufacturing Corp.

Total ecozone exports for 2005 reached \$32 billion or an increase of 3.6 percent from \$30.9 billion in 2004.

Export growth in terms of value showed a slowdown from an average of 16.6 percent from 2002 to 2004.

Still, locator investments showed significant improvement with a 32.8-percent increase to P67.2 billion last year from the P50.6 billion of the previous year.

Also, the number of jobs in ecozones reached 1.1 million in 2005, 9.3 percent more than the 1.02 million jobs reported in 2004.

Cited as outstanding employers were Cientlogie Philippines, Convergys Philippines Services Corp., Dole Philippines Inc., Epson Precision (Philippines) Inc., Lear Automotive Services, Lexmark International (Philippines) Inc., Lufthansa Technik Philippines Inc., Nidec Precision Philippines Corp., Philips Semiconductors and Toshiba Information Equipment (Philippines) Inc.

Earlier, De Lima said Peza approved the registration of 11 projects worth some P307 million in the first 10 days of the year.

She said the projects included two for developers and nine that were mostly related to information technology-based services and manufacturing of products for export.

The biggest of the projects is that of economic zone developer Jovima Management and Development, which involves the operation and maintenance of a P115.2-million seven-story building and another P79.7-million four-story building.

Also awarded for Outstanding Community Projects were CS Garments Inc., Amkor Technology Philippines Inc., Dole Philippines Inc., Ford Motors Co. Philippines Inc., Philippine Associated Smelting and Refining Corp., Philips Semiconductor, Samsung Electronics, Toshiba Information Equipment and TMX Philippines Inc.

Lauded for their outstanding environmental performance were Fairchild Semiconductor Philippines Inc., Ford Motor Co., Taiyo Yuden Philippines Inc., TI (Philippines) Inc. and Toshiba Information Equipment.

Yesterday's awards ceremony was the eleventh event organized by the Philippine Ecozones Association.



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BUSINESS Friday

Business Features Editor Margie Quimpo-Espino

Small fish goes after big fishes

First RP toothpaste maker meets multinationals head on

By Margie Quimpo-Espino

SMALL FISH USUALLY AVOID the big fish. They are content to swim in their own pool, not daring to go out into the big fish's territory, else they end up gastro-nomic fare.

This particular little fish, however, dared to venture into the big fish's territory with the thought of even dominating the pool.

Cecilio K. Pedro, president and CEO of Lamoiyan Corp., maker of Hapee, the first Filipino toothpaste, is this kind of fish as he competes head on with giants Colgate and CloseUp to get a bigger market share.

He believes that little fish can maneuver better and move faster than big fish.

More flexible

"We are more flexible compared to the big ones who can't just come out with new products as these have to be approved by the

head office," says Pedro.

By new products, Pedro refers to new flavors that put a new twist to toothpaste.

For those who still think that toothpaste only comes in the classic mint flavor in white or red gel, the market is abound with unthinkable toothpaste flavors such as chocolate, cookies and cream, strawberry, watermelon, peach, orange, bubble gum. Name it and toothpaste companies are making it.

To compete head on with the top two players, Lamoiyan, which means Irene Lim, the name of his grandmother in Chinese, divided the market into segments.

These are kids, from three to nine; 'tweens from 10 to 14, teenagers from 15 to 19; classic Hapee users from 20 to 35; and Gamrect users, 35 and above.

Gumtect is one of the new products of Hapee—a special formulation toothpaste aimed at keeping gums healthy.

Professionalizing

Aside from segmenting the market, Pedro went on to professionalize his ranks.

He used to do everything, which was typical of entrepreneurs. But lately, he has



THE P5-BILLION toothpaste market is segmented.

learned to hire others to do major tasks.

He got Ding Salvador, former Asean head of Johnson & Johnson, as a marketing consultant. Earlier, Pedro tapped the expertise of Elmer Buntag, who used to be in charge of the Research and Development of Unilever and was responsible for some of the formulation of CloseUp.

Buntag has since passed away but was able to draw up new formulations for Hapee.

Pedro knows he is facing an uphill battle against the big fish in his market. But he is used to overcoming adversity.

Early start

He set up Lamoiyan on Feb. 14, 1987, almost two years after he closed his first company, Aluminum Container Inc., which

supplied the aluminum tubes for toothpaste makers.

His people lost their jobs and he lost 10 years of hard work just because of the decision of multinational firms Philippine Refining Co. (now Unilever, makers of CloseUp) and Colgate-Palmolive to shift from aluminum to laminated plastic tubes.

With 90 percent of their business on toothpaste, and with lots of aluminum tubes left on his hands, Pedro had no choice but to close shop.

Pedro also knew that the only way to make use of the tubes and to re-employ his people was to make his own toothpaste. So he created Lamoiyan and used the brand name Hapee.

Just a variant to the spelling of happy," he says.

Guerilla tactics such as spon-

soring the 1988 Philippine Olympic Team created awareness of the product and a TV ad that featured then a young actress Ruffa Gutierrez made Hapee into a household name.

The fact that Hapee toothpaste's price cost half that of the top two brands made it the third largest selling brand.

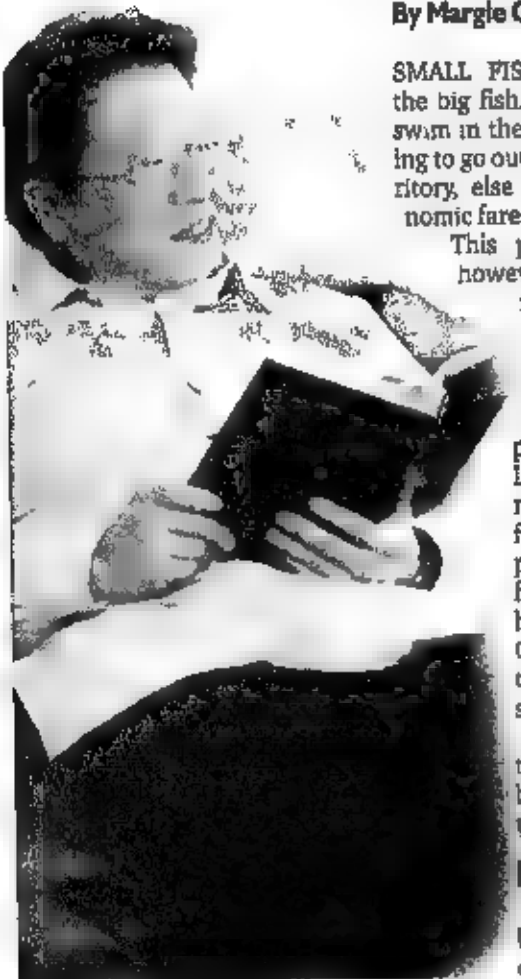
During the 1997 Asian crisis, Lamoiyan's finances were also affected. But in the next few years, Pedro cleaned up liabilities and paid off all debts.

For the past 20 years, Hapee toothpaste was content with being the number three player in the P5 billion to P7 billion toothpaste market in the Philippines.

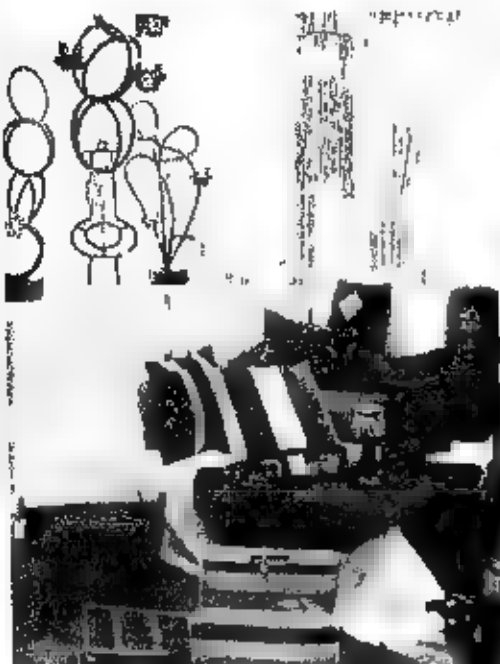
But Lamoiyan's vision has since changed. He now has three goals—compete head on with the big players; look at the export market, and go for a possible public offering.

Pedro's Christian faith keeps him going. One unique thing about Lamoiyan is that it employs deaf-mute individuals.

He grew up in a family where the prevailing sense was "nowhere else to go but in business." At least for the men. And since he was the only boy among six children, he was the one who went into business.



CECILIO Pedro, founder of Lamoiyan Corp.



ITEMS from coco beads by Adolph Coco Beads

ROGER CARPIO

More than just money-making schemes

By Patricia de Leon

BEHIND FOUR OF THE PARTICIPATING exhibitors in the 2006 National Trade Fair are stories that tell of more than just business ventures and money-making schemes.

Organized by the Center for International Trade Expositions and Missions (Citem), Small and Medium Development Group, the Department of Trade and Industry, and other government agencies, the trade fair brings to

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From page B2-1

public awareness the products unique to 16 regions.

But more than being an expo of bags, fabrics, accessories, furniture and food, the 2006 National Trade Fair held last March 15-19 at the SM Megamall Megatrade Halls showcased stories of people helping people.

Tinabuan

How many shop owners can boast of winning for their town a P2-million farm-to-market road grant from their provincial government? Not many, but Esmerina Gabutina can.

The proprietor of Tinabuan, an enterprise that specializes in products woven from abaca, romblon and tikog fibers, proudly tells the story of how her products brought fame, and even economic improvement, to her town.

"The provincial government hosted a trade fair and the prize for best booth was P2 million for a farm-to-market road. Our town's booth won and it was designed with only our products."

"Tinabuan" is the Bisaya word for "pasalubong," with no exact English translation but which means a gift to people from someone who went away.

Representing Misamis Oriental of the Northern Mindanao region in the 2006 National Trade Fair, and hailing from the Lagonlong town which holds weaving as one of its established industries, Tinabuan prides itself in being the only company that practices "mixed weaving."

"All others weave abaca only, or cotton only ... we use many different fibers and weave them together to make our designs," says Gabutina. This technique came to them only last year when the Department of Trade and Industry linked them up with Libby Hoffman of the Canadian Expert Services Organization. Since then, their pillow covers, place mats, table runners and room dividers have stood out even more from among other abaca products. And with the increasing success that Tinabuan is facing, (some of their products were sold out during the first day of the fair) Gabutina plans to help even more people from her town.

Adolph's Coco Beads

Everybody knows that the coconut is the tree of life because almost every part has a use.

The dried coconut kernel, copra, is what Adolph's Coco Beads turns into pillow covers, rugs, and even bags. Although making these products out of coconut is not exactly a novel idea, Amelita Cagorol, the company's marketing manager, is adamant that they are the only company that has the patience to turn copra into small beads and string the beads together with nylon cords, into bags, rugs and other household items.

Cagorol admits that the coco bead idea came from Cebu. But being an innovator, she saw the Cebuano industries' practice of using coco beads only for fashion accessories as a waste. She came up with the idea of turning the beads into

much more useful items. She took this idea, and the bead making technology, back home to Butuan.

Almost a decade into her coco bead business Cagorol has been able to supply her products to gift shops and furniture stores throughout the country. Her products have also been

bought for export. In the process she has also helped countless barangays in Butuan, where she gets weavers from among women who would otherwise be idle. She trains them personally and gives them work whenever orders come in.

And orders have been coming in steadily, she says. So much so that just to meet quota and beat deadlines, husbands who were once doubtful of their wives' sideline, now help in bead stringing and weaving.

Maunlad Coco Coir

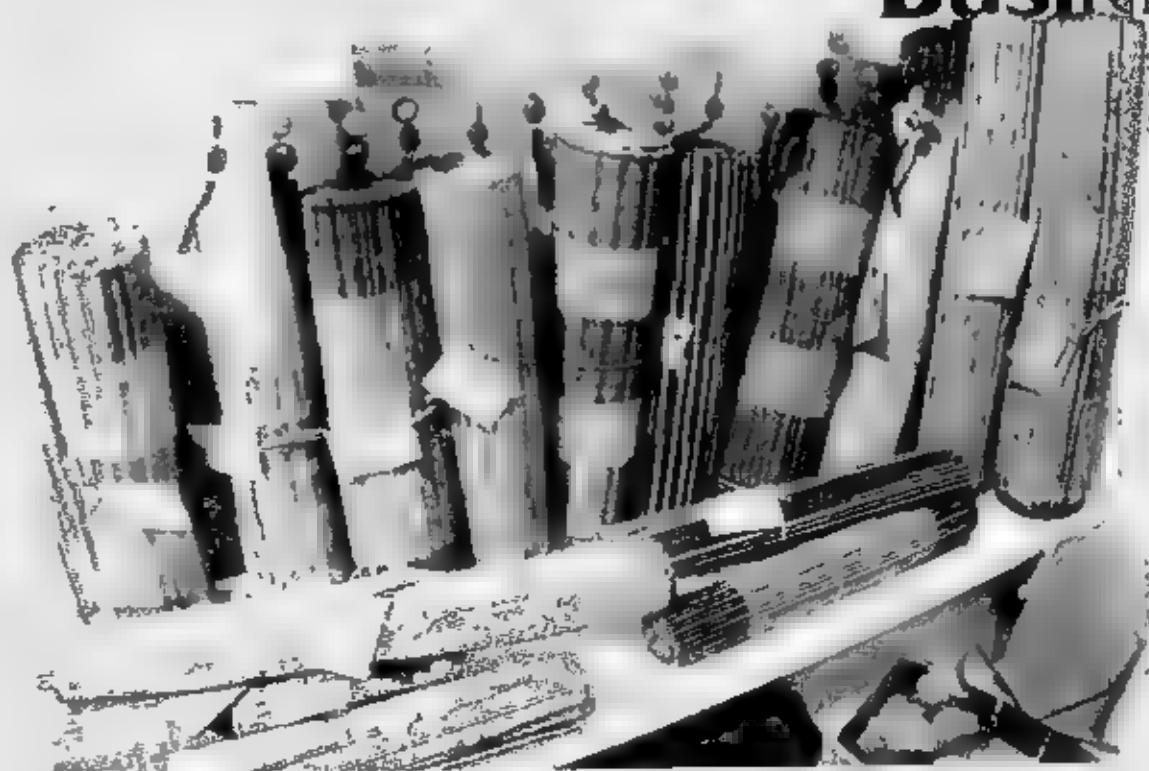
Coir, the fiber from coconut husks, is another by-product that has found many uses. Maunlad Coco Coir, a cooperative based in Hernani, Eastern Samar, processes

coconut fiber into semi-finished products like dyed rubberized liner sheets, garden products and handicrafts. Products from coconut fiber are durable but still biodegradable, which make them practical and environment-friendly at the same time.

The cooperative, which started in 1987 as an agrarian reform beneficiary, takes advantage of the by-products of an LGU-operated oil mill. It was in 2003 when they ventured into the coco coir handicraft business by partnering with the German Development Cooperation. Their rural area, once deprived of basic infrastructure, now has a new road network and cell sites which make it easier to do business.

They have 72 workers, mostly women, who make pots, lamps, bags, baskets and other products from the coconut fiber. Maunlad joined the trade fair looking for partner exporters, and they have caught the eye of traders from Taiwan and Mainland China.

Because of these new opportunities, Anacleto Bantang, Maunlad's plant manager, says their membership is steadily growing. Bantang is also proud that the cooperative has helped women make better use of their time. Instead of gossiping with each other, their members now work to add a



PLACEMAT sets from Tinabuan.

little more income to what their husbands take home.

RS Mfg. Phils.

RS Mfg. Phils., a maker of structured bags based in Taytay, Rizal, started out selling corporate gifts. They were successful from the very start, landing institutional clients like San Miguel Corp. and Philippine Airlines. Cristina Sy, one of RS Mfg. Phils.' owners, attributes this success to their unique look and use of indigenous materials like abaca and rattan on common office items like

desk calendars and planners.

They carried over the use of abaca and rattan when they switched focus to bag making. Their structured bags appeal to the high-end market and Sy is looking forward to tapping this niche. They plan to establish and sell under a brand, and also to venture into exporting.

Sy debunks the idea that business owners do not care about the welfare of their workers. A member of Advocates of Philippine Fair Trade Inc., RS Mfg. Phils. is also looking for ways to make sure its

workers' needs are covered despite bag manufacturing's heavy dependence on seasonal orders.

Their focus on the high-end market, and their advocacy and practice of fair trade ideals make for an ironic combination. But the irony does not end there. While it aims to sell to the rich, RS Mfg. Phils. employs indigenous people as bag weavers. Their rattan bags are made by the Dumagats of Tanay, while their colorful abaca bags are woven by Tbols of Bukidnon. This company has helped revive weaving.



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SSFriday

Blade maker cashes in on sword-and-sandal flicks

By Yolanda Sotelo-Fuertes
PDI Northern Luzon Bureau

POZORRUBIO, PANGASINAN—Felomeno de Guzman, 57, is happy whenever movies featuring medieval swords are being shown worldwide.

It is not because he is a cineasta but movies like these mean increasing orders for the swords he manufactures in his backyard factory here.

De Guzman owns and manages J.J.J. Vaciara, which makes and exports swords, knives, bolos and all kinds of bladed wares.

The 1995 blockbuster "Braveheart" starring Hollywood actor Mel Gibson increased the sales of his "Braveheart" swords.

When the Russell Crowe starter "Gladiator" was shown in 2000, orders for his sword called "Gladius" zoomed.

"We don't exactly copy the designs [of swords used] in the movies. We alter or improve on the designs a little," De Guzman says.

"I am very thankful that there are people around the world who are interested in medieval swords, such as collectors and martial artists. Without them, we will have no business and income, especially because I only finished high school," De Guzman says.

Orders from abroad swamp small smithy in Pangasinan

His shop has produced swords similar to the ones used in the movies "King Arthur" (2004) and "Joan of Arc" (1999). Swords similar to those used in the "Beastmaster" television series also came from his shop.

The most expensive and the most sought after swords crafted by De Guzman are the "katana," which people usually call "Samurai." They cost P7,500 each but many sword collectors still want one in their collections.

The cheapest among his products, at P3,500, is the "Gladius."

De Guzman says his shop churns out an average of 200 swords of various designs in a month. An American businessman buys all his swords and sells these to enthusiasts in the United States and Europe.

De Guzman, his brother Fernando and his brother-in-law Eddie Elena started making swords in 1980. They sold their products at



FELOMENO de Guzman holds a replica of the sword used in the movie, "The Beastmaster."



A WORKER polishes a holster amid the finished products.

PHOTOS BY RAY B. ZAMBRANO FOR NORTHERN LUZON BUREAU

MOVIES like "The Gladiator" jack up sales of the swords.

the former Clark Air Base in Pangasinan and some American soldiers who noticed their products gave them samples of other swords to imitate.

De Guzman says they were "challenged" to improve on the de-

signs and reproduce them.

The three have since parted as business partners but De Guzman pursued the business and penetrated the foreign market.

But it was a long climb up, he says.

His break came in the 1980s when he joined Pistang Pilipino, a trade fair that showcased Philippine handicrafts, in Ermita, Manila.

There he met foreigners who got interested in his products. Later, he forged a deal with an American businessman who now buys all his products.

De Guzman's relationship with

the American buyer was so close that he refused to deal with other businessmen anymore. The American also funded the production in cases that orders were really big.

De Guzman says government agencies like the Department of Trade and Industry and the Department of Science and Technology helped him improve his products.

Is ...

From page B2-4

is not so much the decline of the volume of advertising, but the decline of the influence of advertising people over marketing strategy. In other words, it's a loss of importance that concerns many advertising agencies, not a loss of advertising volume.

In the future, public relations people will have the primary role in developing a brand's marketing strategy, not advertising managers or advertising agencies. A new brand has to have good public relations or it's not going to be successful.

Q: How could you explain the success of brands such as Coca-Cola, Ford and GM, which built and positioned their brands with investments in advertising and remain leaders?

AJ Ries: Coca-Cola, Ford and GM brands (Chevrolet, Pontiac, Oldsmobile, Buick and Cadillac) were built in the distant past by public relations, not advertising.

Take Ford, for example. When Henry Ford built the first production line and manufactured and sold an automobile (the Model T) for an incredibly low price, it created an enormous amount of publicity. Then he paid his workers the astounding sum, for the time, of \$5. As a result, Henry Ford and the Ford Model T were probably as famous in their day as Bill Gates and Microsoft are today.

Today, of course, all of these brands need advertising to maintain the brands. But the brands themselves were built by PR, not advertising. What Ford did in his time, Bill Gates has done today. The Microsoft brand was built by PR. In our opinion, not advertising. As a matter of fact, Microsoft received more publicity last year than any company in the world.

AJ Ries will be in Manila on June 29 to do a one-day brand marketing conference. Send question to AJ Ries at MarketingRx@pdiDSL.net or text us at 0919-314-5412.

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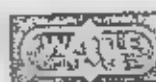
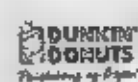


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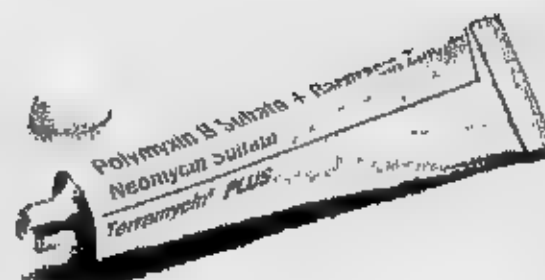
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CHRISTY Joy Camohoy



GORGEOUS candidate and crowd favorite Janice Boteros



CROMWELL Enriquez crowns second runner-up Girlie Ocos while guest singer Keempee de Leon, SM's Boy Palermo and Beth Oranga watch.

THE ANNUAL MISS DINAGYANG OF Iloilo contest is something that *moi* always looks forward to, *palanggas*. So faster than you could bat an eyelash, there I was in Iloilo City as the head of the panel of judges for the Miss Dinagyang 2006 pageant.

Pretty, intelligent and popular Cherry May Barbo, a BS Tourism student and the reigning Miss Central Philippines University, was the hands-down winner from the very start. Taking the thumbs-up of the judges, the stunning looker also bagged the Best in Interview, Best in Dinagyang Terno, and Best in Festival Costume, plus the Darling of the Press Award from Iloilo's Hall Press Corps, which was presented by president Lydia Pondon and past president David Sinay of Panay News, no less.

A close second was statuesque Jane Baruis, while the third placer was eye-catching Girlie Ocos.

Among the eight gorgeous finalists were Christy Camohoy, Rheline Zamora (Miss Talent); Mary Grace Rafil; Cheche Salcepuedes and Charis Bernas.

This year's Miss Dinagyang was definitely one of the best yet, a showcase of elegant fashion, top entertainment, and a spectacle of sights and sounds.

The best part *moi* loved was the fabulous festival costumes done by the candidates' favorite designers. It was a fantastic showcase of talent and imagination that drew loud applause, whistles and howls from the excited audience at Cinema 6 of SM Iloilo.

Candidates wore fire-engine red cocktail dresses by Krizia of SM Department Store; colorful two-piece swimsuits by River Hive; and *hablon* and chiffon ternos by fashion designer Randy Jimenez.

WITHOUT BATTING AN EYELASH

Maurice
Arcache

Photos by Alex Van Hagen
using Kodak EasyShare



Hablon is a world-class material used by local and international designers, *palanggas*. It is the source of local pride of the people of Miag ao, Iloilo, who are known for their craftsmanship.

Good-looking singer-actor Keempee de Leon serenaded the swooning candidates, while handsome actor-model Brad Turvey did a great job hosting the pageant, with national debating champ Sedfrey Cabaluna as the co-host.

The well-picked panel of judges included fashion designer Nono Palmos; smart Arlene Sison of Smart Telecommunications, fun Cromwell Enriquez of Bayview Park Hotel in Manila, adorable Ana Mendoza of Cebu Pacific; Rodolfo Cueva of Negros Navigation Co. Inc.; Boy Palermo of SM Cinema; Beth Oranga of Natasha; and Texas-based Tom Swett.

Making sure the pageant would go smoothly, which it did, were dedicated executive producer and fashion plate Tres Solis; program director Edwin Duero, and Panay News' John B. Castigador, who handled the promotions, *dahlings*.

A little birdie told me that a candidate had a good chance of making it to the finals, but some of the judges and the production staff were appalled by her insolence, arrogance and attitude problem. Oops!

Once the curtains fell, it was time to chill out for the candidates, cast and crew, who were treated to a fun party by Tres Solis at Nena's River Hive Restaurant, where everyone had a blast, especially candidate Donna Dee Tatayon, who was turning into a young, beautiful woman in time for her 18th birthday, *palanggas*.

Birthday outreach

Someone who achieves great success can't help but share the blessings with the less fortunate. And no one knows this more than the very affable and energetic real estate magnate and

civic leader Matilde "Diding" Robles, *palanggas*.

She is president of Royal Homes Marketing Corp., of which her husband of 25 years, Exequiel Robles, is the dynamic CEO.

Hey, there is no doubt that this multifaceted woman is a big star.

So during her big day, instead of accepting gifts, she organized her annual outreach program: three activity-filled days of various programs at different charitable institutions, *palanggas*.

For this year, the first part of her outreach was delivering necessities to the typhoon victims of Calapan, Mindoro. A few days after, she went to Bahay Kanlungan at Mambungan, Antipolo City, a home for the elderly run by the Camilian Sisters. Once again, she spent some time having fun with the elderly folk and providing them with bags of goodies and medicines.

For the last part of her outreach, Diding spent time with the hearing-impaired students of the Ma. Lena Buhay Memorial Foundation Inc. This project was aptly titled "Dinggin ang Pintig ng Pag-ibig" (as in, "Listen to the Pulse of Love"), where Diding organized a tres entertaining program for the students and a fun bash to lift their morale.

Naturellement, this generosity was also witnessed during her Bali-themed birthday party at the sprawling Robles residence in Dela Paz, Antipolo.

A short Mass celebrated by Fr. Ray Garcia opened the bash, followed by a sumptuous dinner, prepared by Diding's gang.

During dinner, a special program, titled "Her Favorite Things," was prepared by Royal Homes with her pals and co-workers, which definitely touched the celebrator.

Her five children—Michael, Jason, Michelle, Marlon and Joanna—presented her with a "cosmetics travel kit and some matching shoes and bags to complement our mama's fashionable lifestyle," as one of her kids said. Her husband, *natch*, gave her a humongous bouquet of her favorite flowers.

Then it was time to rock and roll, and rock everyone did to the swinging sounds of the Side A band. It was the perfect affair to end an event-filled birthday celebration.

For Diding R., it was just the start of another awesome year and more opportunities to touch people's lives through her many endeavors.



ALL LOOKING luscious in their fab costumes are Vienna Legislador, Rheline Zamora and Donna Dee Tatayon.



YOUNG beauties on parade. Cheche Salcepuedes, Girlie Ocos and Jury Magne Tabusares



ILOILO princess Isabel Camille Gallardo and brother Joshua present the scepter and crown to the Miss Iloilo Dinagyang 2006 winner.



CO-HOST Sedfrey Cabaluna with handsome emcee Brad Turvey



TOP DESIGNER Nono Palmos, Ben Jimena and Cynthia Patag's mother, Linda Hohlitzell



HON. JED Mabilog and Iloilo PNP Director Col. Norberto Bautista



WINNERS' circle. Jane Baruis, first runner-up; Cherry May Barbo, Miss Iloilo Dinagyang 2006; and Girlie Ocos, second runner-up



JUDGES Nlewa Soruelo, Cebu Pacific's Ana Mendoza, Smart's Arlene Sison, John B. Castigador and moi



Strictly for ladies

IT'S BEEN THE SEASON OF FASHION AND everything feminine at Robinsons Department Store (RDS) with its promo "It's All About Ladies" this month.

The event opened recently with a live mannequin show in the ladies' section of RDS at Robinsons Galleria. Two models stole the show as live mannequins who changed into different chic outfits that showcased stylish collections from Freego, Crissa, Bobson, RRJ, HerBench, Company B, Candy and Porsche.

Today is the last day for bargain hunters and fashion-forward femmes to splurge on trendy basics and save up to 50 percent on selected ladies' apparel, accessories, shoes and bags. If your single-receipt purchase totals P700, you also get a free ladies' shirt.

Also, get a chance to win great prizes including an overnight stay at a hotel, buffet dinner, hair and makeup package and a P50,000 shopping raid at RDS Galleria in the "Girlfriend Bonding Package" promo.

"It's All About Ladies" happens in all RDS branches located in Robinsons Malls, Waltermart Malls, Tutuban Center, Metropolis Star and Festival Mall in Alabang and Nepo Mall Pampanga.

ON KRISTEL: HerBench crisp white polo, HerBench denim shorts, shoes and bag from Australian, scarf from RDS



BOBSON striped three-fourths shirt, Bobson denim skirt, shoes and bag from Australian, scarf from RDS

FREEGO white baby tee, Freego denim mini skirt with floral embroidery, shoes and bag from Australian

It's getting tougher...

From page C4

continue Philippine Fashion Week which is now on its 10th year.

I asked Joey how things have been and the pint-size guy who took on this giant project could only roll out his tongue to indicate how exhausting it has been. It's no joke trying to get sponsors for this roughly P10 million project. The Fashion Week has 106 designers, 10 days to run.

Of course, it helps that Joey has one of the biggest modeling agencies in the country, with more than a hundred in his stable. So he really has something at stake in the fashion industry.

Just like the rest of the local fashion industry, he envies Hong Kong, Thailand, Singapore, Malaysia for mounting their own fashion weeks—supported by their governments.

These countries now see fashion design as a major tourism tool, apart from being a viable industry.

From Joey comes another good news: the Supermodel Charo Ronquillo whom he groomed and who has bested models from 30 countries in the Ford's Supermodel search, is getting her breaks in New York. The 17-year-old student from Laguna has caught the eye of A-list photographers like Steven Meisel.

DJ comes to town

The hot ticket tonight is the big dance event featuring the world's best DJ, Tiesto, at PICC Forum, organized by Edge Pamute. Some 15,000 hyper-energy bodies are expected.

The trade buzz is the closing of men's shopping magazine, Cargo. After two years of what WWD calls "setbacks and reversals," the Conde Nast magazine has its last issue this May. It didn't go the way of its very successful female counterpart, the precedent-setting Lucky. WWD wrote, "Cargo left the world the way it entered it: with much scratching of heads."

E-mail the author at thelma_ssanjuan@abs.pinyocentral.com

ON MELISSA: Candy green cropped knit sweater, Candy purple tank top and Candy flared khaki pants



CO. B black baby tee, Co. B low-rise denims, shoes and bags from Australian, scarf from RDS

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LIFESTYLE

Monique Lhuillier's Manila show set in November

FLASH! THE MUCH-AWAITED Monique Lhuillier fashion show is finally pushing through on Nov. 12.

The people behind the project—Doris Magsaysay-Ho of the Asian Society and Gina Lopez and Mons Tantoco of ABS-CBN Foundation—are reportedly planning a gala and another show. They are also said to be tapping Imelda Cojuangco to chair the organizing committee.

Travails of fashion organizing

Hardly did I expect that after years of covering fashion shows and designers—paying my dues, so to speak—I'd end up mounting fashion shows myself for these designers, and thus paying more dues

Some karma. I sometimes chide designer-friends that from covering them, I've turned into their fundraiser, a fashion impresario of sorts. Like many life-altering things, it happened accidentally—when instinct led us to mount a retrospective exhib-

it of Joe Salazar during, as it would turn out, Joe's final year. From then on, our Metro Magazine moved on to bigger shows—the annual Metrowear, among them.

I mention this only to note that it's getting harder to organize fashion shows and, thus, to build a so-called fashion industry. It was never easy to begin with. However, what makes it especially harder this time is that there are no more regular fashion patrons who will bankroll a show.

In the '70s and early '80s, Imelda Marcos and her Blue Ladies saw to it that fashion helped promote the country's image for whatever political ends they might have had. There were the Bagong Anyo and the galas of select designers—from Christian Espiritu to Pitoy Moreno. Those were grand, or at least elaborate, affairs funded and patronized by the social and political elite.

Also in the '70s and '80s were the daily (yes, daily) luncheon fashion series mounted by then-new five-star hotels, which were

LIFE-STYLED



Thelma Sison
San Juan

**But it's
getting
tougher
to produce
fashion shows**

competing fiercely against each other, notably Hyatt and Hilton, both of which tapped the society doyennes to mobilize their wide social networks. These were, of course, Clueto Madrigal and Conching Sunico.

The daily series was what made today's fashion stalwarts, from Inno Sotto, Larrie Silva, Auggie Cordero to Joe Salazar, Rusty Lopez, Gang Gomez—their skills honed in the do-or-die competition and their grit formed by merciless reviews in the dailies. This era also produced the supermodel Anna Bayle and other top models like Bessie Badilla who knew how to parade in RTW and swimwear as well as in haute couture gowns.

From the '80s to the '90s there was also Imelda Cojuangco and PLDT who sponsored the prime fashion fare and major cultural concerts.

The Aquino era still saw a fashion gala now and then. The Ramos administration, through First Lady Ming Ramos and the Cabinet Ladies Foundation, aimed big in

fashion and achieved much in Asean. Tapping Richard Tann, Ming Ramos had the highly successful and precedent-setting Asean Design Shows which drew to Manila the designers from all over Asean—and CNN's Elsa Klensch.

If I remember right, there were also major fashion shows in the short-lived Estrada administration through First Lady Lol Ejercito. In the current administration, I don't remember any (I could be wrong, though), busy as the President has been in trying to survive.

From the '60s onwards, it has been to each his own in mounting fashion shows. It's been tough. Fashion shows have nowhere to look at but corporations for sponsorships, and big business looks at fashion to promote its product or services. It's a tough sell.

Fashion Week

How gutsy of producer Joey Espino to

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The fun is in the finds

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MARKET!

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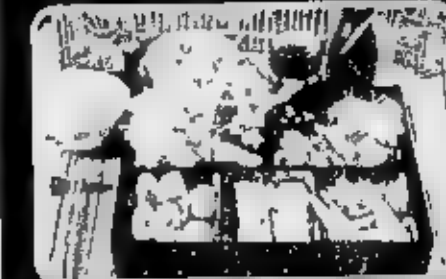
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LIFESTYLE

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BEAUTY

Editor Chelo Banal-Formoso
Contributing editor
Ria Francisco-Prieto
E-mail me at rbeauty@inquirer.com.ph



Bravura
beauty treats

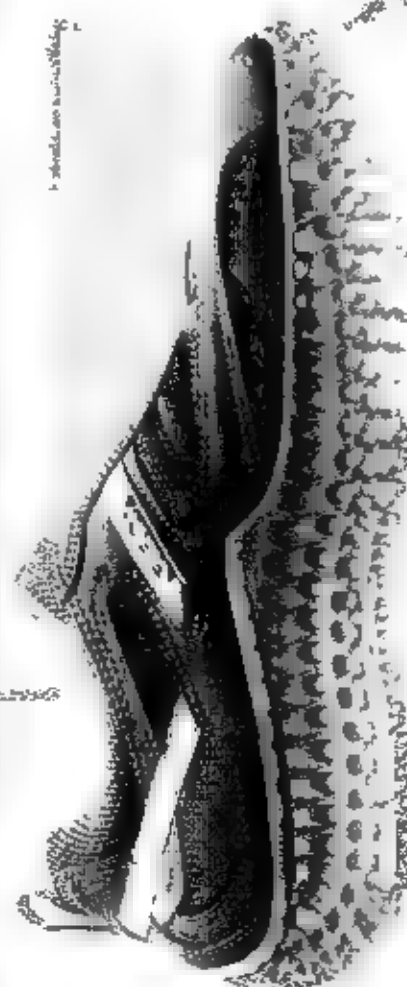
I believe Awake is one brand
that has to be discovered
by everyone. It delivers!

STORY ON PAGE D3

KNOCKOUT!



Ria Francisco-Prieto



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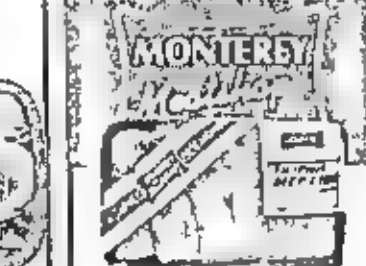
Century
Century Tuna, 1kg P24.75, 5kg P123.75



Chicken Hotdog
1kg P108.25, 5kg P541.25



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Elsie's
Elsie's, 1kg P11.55, 5kg P57.75



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Party, 1kg P36.25, 5kg P181.25



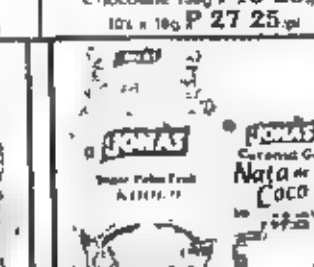
Fay's
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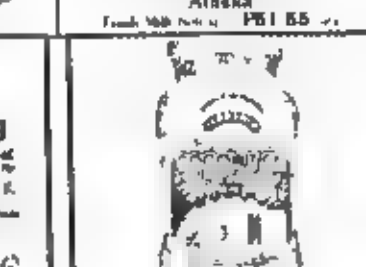
C2 Green Tea
C2 Green Tea, 1kg P14.50, 5kg P72.50



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Jona's, 1kg P123.50, 5kg P617.50



Jona's
Jona's, 1kg P123.50, 5kg P617.50



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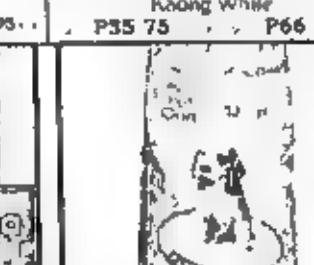
Wawa's
Wawa's, 1kg P109.50, 5kg P547.50



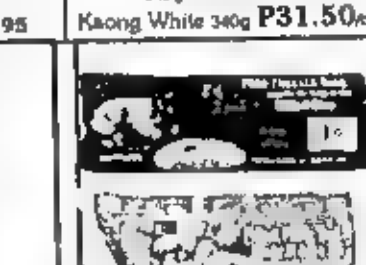
Jolly
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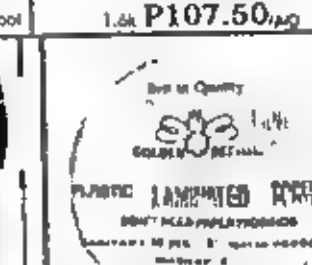
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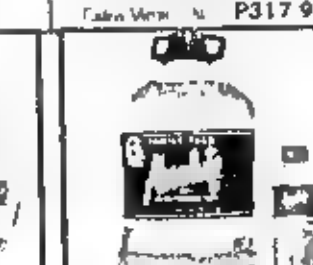
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Pet One, 1kg P165.75, 5kg P828.75



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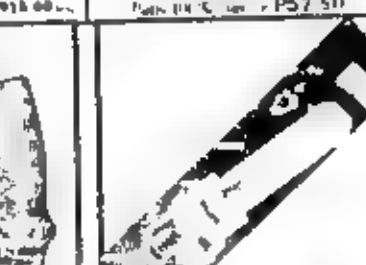
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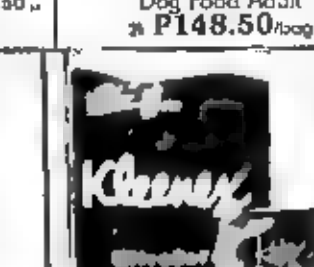
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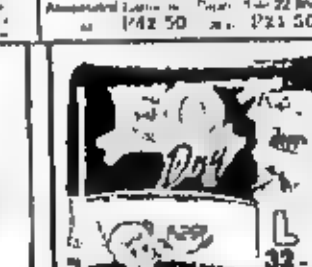
Lysol
Lysol, 1kg P195.00, 5kg P975.00



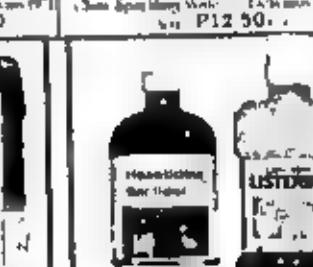
Kleenex
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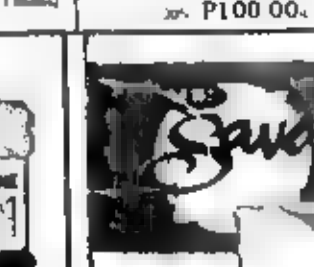
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cut & keep



AFTER: pretty striding

Red-hot lippies

Because you know you should try it once in your life

IF YOU WANT TO BE NOTICED, WEAR RED LIPSTICK.

Red doesn't have to be a strong statement, unless you want it to be. A gloss or a hint of red can be just as effective. Lipstick is the most versatile makeup because you can change it according to your mood.

Feeling flirty? Use ultra-sheer pink gloss. Sad? Try burgundy. Happy? Go for crimson red! The important thing here is to feel comfortable and happy with your style.

There are so many ways to apply color to your lips as there are so many shades, so experiment, experiment, till you find the right color and method for you!

Step by step to perfect lips

1. Before you begin, cover your lips with a thin layer of foundation or powder to provide a good base for the color. Make this an automatic step when making up your face.

2. Starting at the center of your upper lip, draw a line to each outer corner, following the edge of your natural lip line. Repeat to draw a line on the bottom lip.

3. Apply the red lipstick. Whether from the tube, a brush or your finger, start from the center of the top or bottom lips and glide the color to the corner. If you want the just-been-kissed look, supply with your fingers for that stained effect.

Try Maybelline Moisture Extreme in Mystic Burgundy, Art Deco Glamour Gloss in 82 and Shu Uemura Lipstick in 279

4. Blot with tissue and reapply the color again.

As for the rest of the face, keep it neutral. Do not wear bold eye colors if you're having red lips, since it would be too much to look at. Just line your eyes and curl your lashes for that polished look.

TEXT AND MAKEUP: BARRI CHAN



BEFORE: pretty plain

Bravura... From page D1

I ENJOY GETTING MESSAGES at home. The sad news is, I have yet to find a home-service company with a therapist I like. I have actually experienced a masseuse from hell. Every touch was pure pain. I told her to stop pressing on my spine. I would stop breathing once in a while to brace myself from the pain. As stupid as it sounds, I was actually waiting for it to get better, but it never did. After the massage, I needed to get another one... fast!

So I promised myself, when I find a good masseuse, I would write about her so you won't have to experience the masseuse from hell. And that experience also got me thinking of all the products I bought because of their good advertising and celebrity endorsers but were just a waste of money.

In my effort to avoid buying beauty products that actually don't work, I decided to walk around the beauty counters of Essences and Rustan's Department Store and do my own product research. I knew I won't be able to try all the products but, if I asked the salesladies their bestsellers, there was a high probability of them being good products because their consumers actually went back for seconds and thirds. I also checked out my favorite tested brands.

My first stop was L'Occitane. I love its honey moisturizing mask. Apparently, the Almond line is also a bestseller. What's great about L'Occitane is you can ask about the products' history and they're always made available to you. I found out that the almond tree was traditionally a symbol of the Provencal landscape, just like lavender and olive oil. But from the 1930s, when it was replaced by more profitable crops, it became scarce.

L'Occitane products use almonds only from Provence to rebuild the presence of almond trees in this province. Wow, what rich history and what a great cause. Best of all, almonds are well-known for their moisturizing and softening benefits, plus the almond shell has firming and revitalizing powers. Combined with other ingredients, these proteins fight the appearance of cellulite and reshapes the silhouette.

The Almond line also comes with an almond-scented candle that is sensual and will make every room smell gorgeous.

Experience

I then went to Awake. I believe Awake is one brand that has to be discovered by everyone. It delivers!

Its new product, Stardom, is an aqua translucent powder that is 77 percent wa-

ESTÉE
Lauder
refining
eye serum



L'OCCITANE Almond Scented Candle

ter-based. I tried it and it has a refreshing cooling effect that's great for our hot weather. I also ended up with a semi-matte finish. I was glowing but not looking like I had oily skin. Awake products are an experience in my book.

Under-eye wrinkles are something people don't worry about until they are actually visible. When it comes to beauty, prevention is the best solution. Estée Lauder has an eye-refining serum that

irons out fine lines. Since the skin under your eyes is actually seven times weaker than the skin of the face, it is more prone to sagging, dryness and dullness.

The serum gives intense hydration and optical diffusers that help refract light away from the skin and visibly blur the fine and dry lines around the eyes. I had to get it!

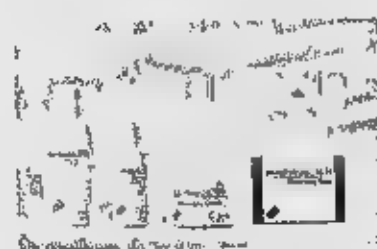
I spent the whole afternoon happily going counter-hopping. I found more

products than I thought I could find. Best of all, I think they're the best of the best out there. Hopefully, I'd never again have to buy a lemon product.

A piece of advice: If you find yourself depressed one day, go beauty shopping and do your own research on beauty products. Walk around the store, try the testers and take your pick. You never know what you'd end up having on your way home.

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SCHOOL IS OVER! THIS MEANS FAMILIES and students will be spending more time out of town or outdoors.

Everyone thinks it is all fun but I always put a damper on things as I worry about body odor and skin disasters. But we are lucky because there seems to be a product for every beauty scare.

Flat hair boosters. L'Oreal Party proof hair gel (P445) is sweat-, water-, and humidity-proof. It's great for short hairstyles and is now my brother's favorite hair gel.

No matter how sweaty or rained on you get, the strategically rumpled style is maintained throughout the day. It can easily be removed by shampoo and water.

Kerastase Volumactive shampoo and Vitacem leave-on conditioning treatment. Those with thin, limp hair look like drowned rats with sweat added on. Big, bodacious hair is now within reach. This shampoo really gives body to my thin hair. It's as close to Pamela-Anderson hair as I can get with minimal styling aids.

Smelly scalp syndrome. Oily-hair shampoos like Apivita for intensely greasy hair really soaks up the oil (responsible for making our scalp smelly). Even when I sweat profusely I notice that there is no bad odor. Apivita even reduces hair fall dramatically as oily hair is one of the main reasons for baldness.

Suncare for face. Specific sunblock for the face is a must as unlike the body, this is most prone to breakouts. This simple concoction is the closest to the fountain of youth as we can get. Clarins' bestsellers are the Anti-Aging SPF 30 face sunblock and Clarins SPF 30 sunblock for eyes, which is specifically designed for the gentle eye area where the first signs of aging emerge. L'Oreal tinted moisturizer SPF 50 is great for adding sheer color to even out skin tone. It's also great for sun protection. Of course, Japanese SPF's such as Awake SPF 47 and Shu Uemura Xtreme Defender SPF 50 can also stand alone or be applied under foundation.

For greasy skin, here are the best protective mattifiers that don't make me breakout. VMV Armada line of sunblock from SPF 30-SPF 70 or Shiseido sunblock SPF 30 and up or their SPF 43 foundation. VMV also has the highest sun protection lip balm with Armada SPF 60.

Refreshing fragrances are a must whatever time of day during the humid summer time. The strong sexy scents over the holidays will

just mix with sweat and morph into something resembling B.O., which is so unsexy. Try these new arrivals from the fragrance industry.

Live by J.Lo. At last something by her that I can actually use. I detect pear, pineapple, coconut and sugar scents that make my mouth water. The bottle is hands-down the prettiest of all perfume bottles as it resembles Murano glass.

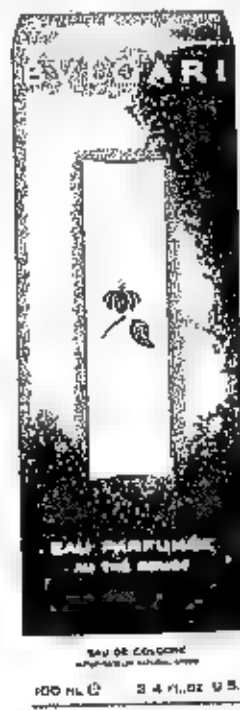
Bulgari Au Thé Rouge (Red Tea) This newest addition to their tea family is

actually something one would either hate or love. To me it smells like good sangria—refreshing but sweet and slightly woody and can be worn from day into night.

Clarins Eau Tranquility. The classic aquatic scent even men love.

Grapefruit- or pomelo-type scents—Clinique Happy in Bloom, Comptoir Sud Pacifique O' Pomelo and Lacoste Touch of Pink. Smells like soap and water—Woods of Windsor Forget Me Not and Clean (Ultimate, Fresh Laundry and Classic)

Clean, Comptoir, Woods of Windsor and Apivita are exclusively available at Essences. Clarins, Clinique, Awake and Shu Uemura at Rustan's Dept. Store.



BULGARI Au Thé Rouge spray



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HAIR ASSISTANT ALVIN DE GUZMAN OF FRANCK PROVOST
A-LIST GRAPHIC DESIGN
GISEL BALANQUIT OF CARVAN

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IN THIS ISSUE

A-LIST designers revealed

/E2

BODACIOUS 'bakya' for the trendy

/E4

MANILA'S top models

/F2



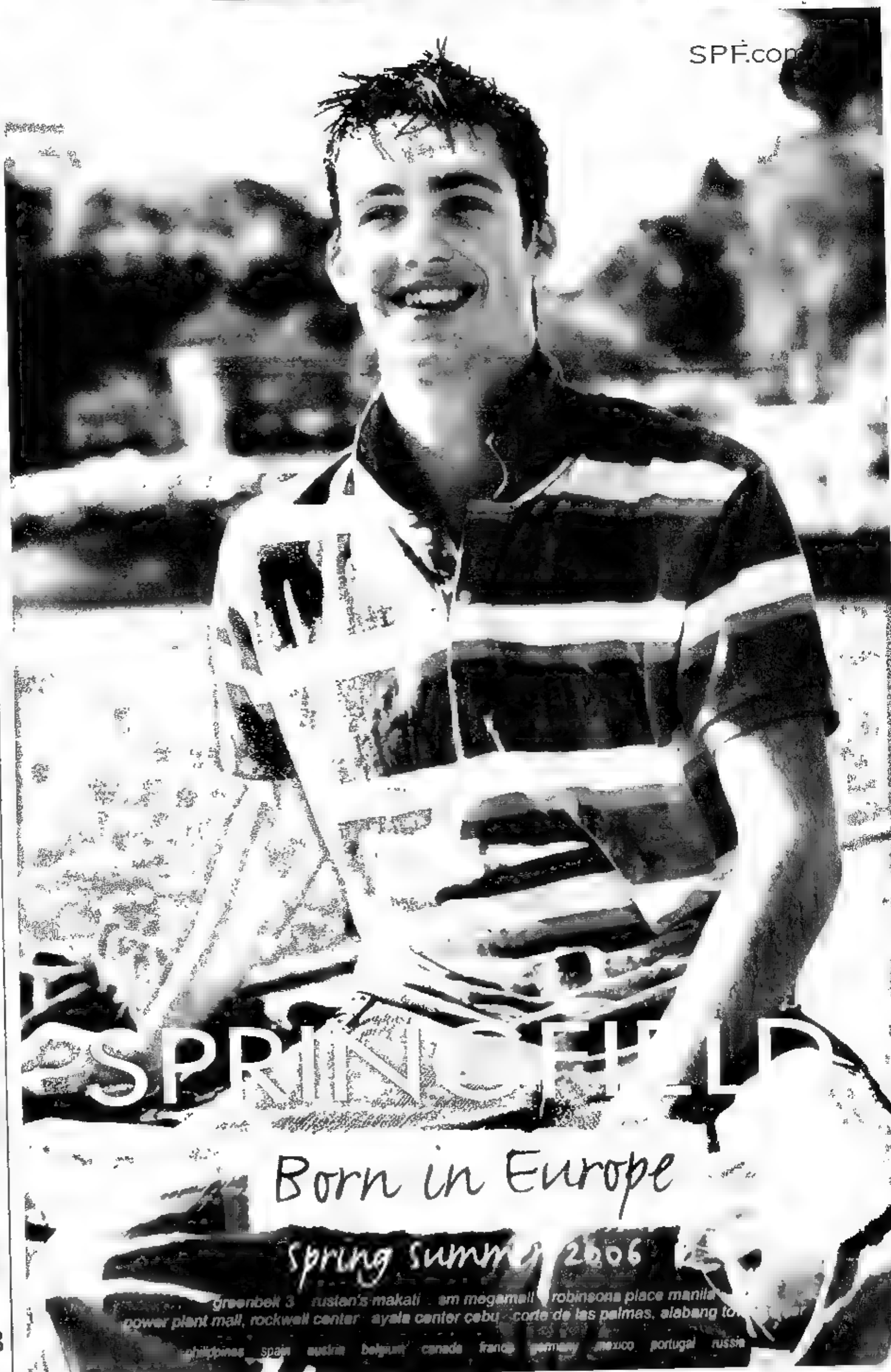
Inno Sotto's ode to perfection

/F1



Big, bold shades to suit your shape

/E3



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By Alex Y. Vergara

HOW OFTEN HAVE YOU HEARD the messenger? We at INQUIRER

Fashion make our own appeal as we elevate fashion designers Ivarlusi Aseron, Rhett Eala, Joji Lloren, Dennis Lustico and Joey Samson to our A-list. Now, down with those eyebrows, please.

Just like other art forms, fashion design is highly subjective and not without its share of controversy. It may seem like a glamorous and profitable business, but it's also a competitive and high-profile endeavor fraught

with intrigues and rivalries, both real and imagined. The onion-skinned and weak of heart need not apply.

But this creative bunch seems unmindful of such realities. No one is impervious to criticism since all of them have had their fair share of less-than-glowing reviews. Rather than allow such negative comments and comparisons to consume them, however, many just shrug them off as par for the course.

"Competition acts like a bunch of hatteries that add to my mind," says Lustico. "I'm conscious of competition and I acknowledge it for helping me to survive more. As far as criticisms go, they now take two to three minutes of my time. I forget about them soon enough and move on."

Some people may have certain misgivings about our choices, but as a whole, we hope most will agree and see the merits behind such a list. Just like bonafide A-listers Inno Sotto, Aggie Cordero, Picoy Moreno and the late Joe

Drum roll, please, for our fashion A-list: Ivarlusi Aseron, Rhett Eala, Joji Lloren, Dennis Lustico and Joey Samson!



PHOTOGRAPH BY NICHOLAS OF EDGE OF LIGHT STUDIOS
STYLING: HILLET ARZAGA
MAKEUP: LIEUEN DELUCA OF FRANK'S PROVOOST
HAIR: LAUREN JEBERT OF FRANK'S PROVOOST
HAIR ASSISTANT: ALVIN DE GUZMAN OF FRANK'S PROVOOST
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GENEL BALANQUIT OF CARTAN

Joji Lloren, Mr. Clean

Age: "Not that young anymore!"
Education: BS Clothing Technology, University of the Philippines
Special training: Concours International des Jeunes Createurs de Mode (Paris) on draping, design, couture sewing, prêt-à-porter (RTW) sewing, costume design, textile design and working on flat patterns

Years in the biz: 10
Trademark: Lloren is adept at working with soft as well as rigid fabrics, as he can do draping and tailoring with equal ease. But the wonders he does don't end there. Drawing from his Zen-like aesthetic and extensive couture training in Paris, Lloren fashions well-constructed gowns that are minimally embellished, and cleanly and impeccably sewn inside out.

Lloren is also generous enough to share his knowledge to colleagues through regular workshops on pattern-making. Best of all, he possesses an ego that's inversely proportional to his huge talent.

Idols in the biz: Christian Dior, Yves Saint Laurent, Hussein Chalayan, Issac Mizkay, John Galiano and Inno Sotto.

Thoughts on winning the Paris list: "I'd like to think that after my winning the contest, young designers became excited to join. But that also led them to thinking they had to learn the basics first. There's really no other way."

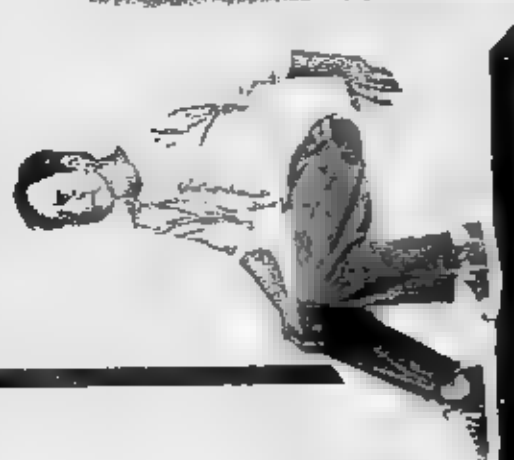
Saazar and Ramon Valera, these five young talents are focused and imbued with unceasing curiosity and a sense of daring and originality.

Loyal following

Despite their attempts to push the envelope, however, they have managed to cultivate a loyal following (including a number of high-profile society and show-biz muses) and thus make their respective businesses viable. Such a tough balancing act is quite difficult to pull off in a country where even supposedly rich and educated people put little premium on haute couture. Take it from the Paris-trained Lloren:

"Unfortunately, the Philippine market doesn't have enough respect for Filipino designers," he laments. "Some clients, for instance, don't mind spending thousands of dollars on imported designer shoes and bags, but find it difficult to shell out even P10,000 for a couture piece made by a Fil-

ON ANA Lloren: Joji Lloren's strapless empire-style column dress in ecru organdy and black crepe; Jul B. Dizon's flower crystal quartz brooch with black sapphires and diamonds



Ivarlusi Aseron, the Intellectual

Age: 35
Education: BS Nursing
Years in the biz: 6
Trademark: Aseron may appear a bit shy and tentative in person, but don't ever underestimate the soft-spoken designer. His clothes, like the ones he showed during last year's "Declaration" pack a wallop. What's amazing is he achieves such an effect not by resorting to a gazillion beads and tried-and-tested visual gimmicks. If anything, Aseron's pieces have an intellectual quality to them—much like vivid words on paper and brilliant images on screen—that communicate and draw you in.

Like Lloren, Aseron is adept at manipulating soft and rigid fabrics through ad hoc draping and precision cutting. But his true genius lies in making something so complicated seem so easy to do and such a joy to behold.

Idols in the biz: Alexander McQueen and Inno Sotto.
On inspirations: "I get all sorts of inspiration everywhere. Let's say I'm eating out with friends and an idea pops out. I make it a point to remember the moment and write it down as soon as possible. Otherwise, I simply forget it. I can't live without my sketchpad. Whenever I have an idea I just have to find the time to draw it."

ipino. The situation would probably change if we make it big abroad and come back."

They're not about to throw in the towel despite such nagging setbacks. All of them, with the exception of Eala, want to try their hand at doing RTW pieces, albeit on a limited and more exclusive scale. If a designer wants to remain viable, not a few of them attest, RTW is the only way to go.

After a successful run as owner and in-house designer of his very own label Wink, the Florentine-trained Eala quit the RTW scene last year to focus on bridal and couture pieces. He has no reason to regret his decision.

"With the entry of bigger and cheaper imported brands, RTW has become harder to sustain," he says. "You can be more creative with MTQ (made-to-order), whereas in RTW, all you think of most of the time is cost. Will this dress sell or not? You always have to be in touch with your market. It's become like a science."

Indeed, like Sotto (the designer's designer idolized by Lloren, Lustico, Aseron and Samson), these five designers are articulate, educated, well-read and have a clear sense of what they want. Unlike certain non-talents out purely for publicity and financial gain, these designers treat fame and fortune as by-products of their creativity and hard work.

Individual strengths

As a result of their being aware of their respective niches in the industry, they're not reluctant to capitalize on their individual strengths. Nor do they feel threatened if a not name breaks into the already crowded fashion scene. In fact, they are secure of their positions and seem to take pride in being different from one another as designers.

"Perhaps I made it to this list because of what you saw in my work," says Samson, who,

unlike the others, is known for his impeccably tailored clothes.

"It's an honor as well as a challenge to constantly improve myself and supplement my knowledge," he adds. "At the same time, however, I don't feel compelled to do what the other designer does. I just have to generate ideas based on what I do best."

But unlike Sotto, Aseron and company are the first to admit they're no master tacticians. Apart from his innate talent and business acumen, their idol never seems to run out of a game plan in whatever he does. His resiliency, even during times of personal crises, and ability to latch on to trends and make them as if they're his own, are traits the five have yet to perfect.

"Inno is a cut above the rest," says Aseron. "His image, extraordinary talent and his innovative

mind are the stuff every young designer aspires for. But unlike him, I'm not the type who sticks to a plan. I used to do that, but I easily got frustrated if it didn't pan out."

Lustico is all praises as well for Sotto. "He's blessed with a brilliant mind not only as a designer, but as a person and as a businessman," he says. "His vision of what a woman should be is always evident in his designs."

Only time will tell if, like Sotto, our five choices have got what it takes to transcend limitations set by a fledgling local market and adapt to the vagaries of an ever-fickle and demanding profession. Just don't shoot us (again?) if they don't.

E-mail the author at vergara@inquirer.com.ph



ON MAAN Bayet: Dennis Lustico's silk chiffon and organdy gown; Jul B. Dizon's yellow-gold bangle with green moonstone and semi-precious stones

ON JOANI Bitagcol: Ivarlusi Aseron's strapless satin gown; silver shell necklace, stylist's own

Dennis Lustico, the Ladies' Man

Age: 35
Education: Registered nurse
Work-related experience: Designing jobs "from Abad Santos (Street) to Alirum to Berango"
Years in the biz: 8
Trademark: As far as we know, Lustico is no Don Juan. The tap is a tribute to his ability to come up with shapely as well as flowing numbers that instantly flatter the feminine form.

From his salad days as a designer of edgy pieces, Lustico has now found his footing designing eye candy made of chiffon, silk and organdy. Live Inno Sotto, he's also a master of coloration and draping.

Critics have accused Lustico of playing it safe lately by coming up with delicate crowd-pleasers. But we'd like to think that he has simply become more realistic by making clothes that work.

Idols in the biz: Roland Mouret, Vivienne Westwood and Inno Sotto.
On mixing art with business: "The issue, which sooner or later every designer needs to come to terms with, is you're not the person wearing your clothes. It comes with maturity and also the realization that clothes are clothes. They're not pieces of sculpture, but are there to enhance the wearer."

Joey Samson, the Architect

Age: 35
Education: BS Biology De La Salle University
Work-related experience: Assistant designer to Danilo Franca
Years in the biz: 6
Trademark: Samson is known for exquisitely tailored and wearable pieces injected with Llusua, sometimes off-center twists. As such, he's one of the few local names who can fashion fluid pieces for men as well as women using such stiff and often limiting fabrics as wool, denim and cotton twill.

In his desire to put more femininity into his clothes, the articulate designer, who, like his well-crafted outfits, speaks softly but with deliberate precision, has recently made a more conscious effort to study the works of French designer Madeleine Vionnet.

Like his good friend Aseron, Samson favors fabric manipulation over beadwork.

Idols in the biz: The Japanese designers, Madeleine Vionnet, Joji Lloren and Inno Sotto.

Why Sotto? "I love it when Inno says his clothes are simple, but (to me) definitely not plain. You can tell, for instance, that it's just a skirt (dress). But he somehow always manages to add a bit of drama without overdoing it."

ON ISABEL Rocas: Joey Samson's fitted jacket and skirt reworked from a black suit; Amilia Aranaz-Alunan's "Moonlight" purse of Swarovski crystals

ON NICOLETTE Bell: Rhett Eala's shredded Grecian-inspired top in green silk chiffon; Jul B. Dizon's white gold choker with lemon topaz cabochons, diamonds, blue sapphires and tsavorites



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"TUTUB" or not "tutub"? Versus sunglasses are big, bold and beautiful!

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IN AN EFFORT TO AVOID BEING recognized by the paparazzi (or at the very least, shield their eyes from the blinding glare of gazillion flash bulbs), the young Hollywood set wear their gargantuan plastic rimmed sunglasses day and night.

Their shades are practically glued to their faces, so much so that we've come to identify celebrities by them.

The eye bugs: Nicole, MK, Ashley and Paris, who prefer giant Jackie O. types; while Gwynne and Kate go for big wrap styles. The bad and the beautiful Lindsay and JLo favor oversize aviators.

It's a classic case of Hollywood irony, made even more compelling when you know the history of sunglasses: they were first used in China (as early as the 12th century) by judges in Chinese courts, who wore them to hide their facial expressions while questioning witnesses ("Were those atrocious slippers really a gift, or did you actually purchase them yourself? Confess or be damned!") It was only in 1929 that sunglasses were used for actual protection of the eyes from the sun's rays.

Jenni Epperson

So now we're all happily obsessed with finding our dream pair of shades. There are three things I collect: glassware (as in baso) luggage (it's a Freudian thing, a way of reminding myself to travel more often) and tutub-type sunglasses.

I've traveled great lengths, well, more like, I ask my jetsetter friends (thanks Lounell) to travel great lengths to buy me the biggest "it" sunnies available. My current obsession is the Dior Glossy I. I first saw it in Vogue (Kate Moss models it). They're so humongous that they look like an eclipse on my face and I love it! I had to snap them up in both black and beige.

Sunny side of life

It's easy to go nuts when you're in the market for a pair of sunglasses. Role-playing possibilities are endless! Do you want to be the Hemophag hero, Violet Song jat Shariff? Ms Don't Mess With Me Trinity? Your chic-ness, Audrey Hepburn? One of the Baywatch boobs, er, babes?

As you stand before that mirror, pouting and smiling, wondering if that pair will be good enough for scoping out the hotties on the beach or on a crowded city street, or hiding your hangover with just the right mix of chic and disdain, here are a few things to keep in mind

Balancing act

As a general rule, you should get a frame that offsets the shape of your face. In other words, go the other direction. Round face=square frames; square face=rounded frames.

When it comes to balancing the size of your face

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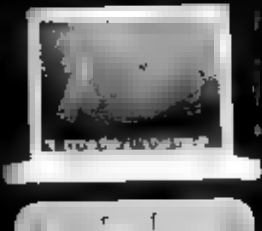
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HARD TO GET. Ms Moss may be easier to track down these days than my current obsession—Dior's Glossy I sunglasses.

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See no evil

From page E2

however, it's not about going the other direction—you should go for sameness instead. If you've got a small face, go medium delicate frames. If you've got a large face with dramatic features, let a larger frame even out your features out.

For the devil-may-care, it doesn't matter if your face is as small as a bottle cap, or as round as a bilao, go ahead and wear your mom's vintage oversize shades. You may not look like Jackie but with an attitude like Marilyn, you're sure to hook your John.

I gotta wear shades

Doesn't matter why you wear them: whether to be incognito, to get recognized or most important, to protect your eyes from the Big Bad Sun. Donning a pair of sunglasses instantly adds a shade of mystery and a touch of glamour to your predictable life.

So look at the world through dark-colored glasses. Sometimes it's better to see things for not what they really are—and you can scope out all the hot guys while you're at it.

E-mail: jfashuan@inquirer.com.ph

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DON'T be square, try Calvin Klein shades.

Round

Your mother says you'll be thankful for your round face when you're old and wrinkled and gravity kicks in. But right now, you're feeling less pretty and more like a walking *ensaymada*. To fight the baked-goods blues, shop around for a frame that's wider than it is long, and angular to counterbalance the softness of your round face. It'll give you that thinner, longer and narrower effect (sans the surgery).



IF VERSUS sunglasses are good enough for Gwyneth, they're good enough for you.

Square

The lantern jaw, the broad forehead and the square face may be equal in length and width, but they're angular (think Gwyneth Paltrow). Rounded frames and ovals that have more width than height should soften you up.



DKNY gold-rimmed aviators

Heart

Your broad forehead, strong cheekbones and narrow chin put you in the same category as happy birthday-singing Marilyn Monroe and new Versace vixen Halle Berry. You wear your heart not on your sleeve, but on your face. Again, go the other way and choose frames that are wider at the bottom, and narrower at the top. I know, I know, they sound hard to find. If push comes to shove, reach for rimless styles instead.



CALVIN Klein oversized sunglasses
Oval

These are the women you want to kill. They look good in any hairstyle, they can choose any kind of frame they want, and I'm not wasting any more words on these utterly unfair creatures!

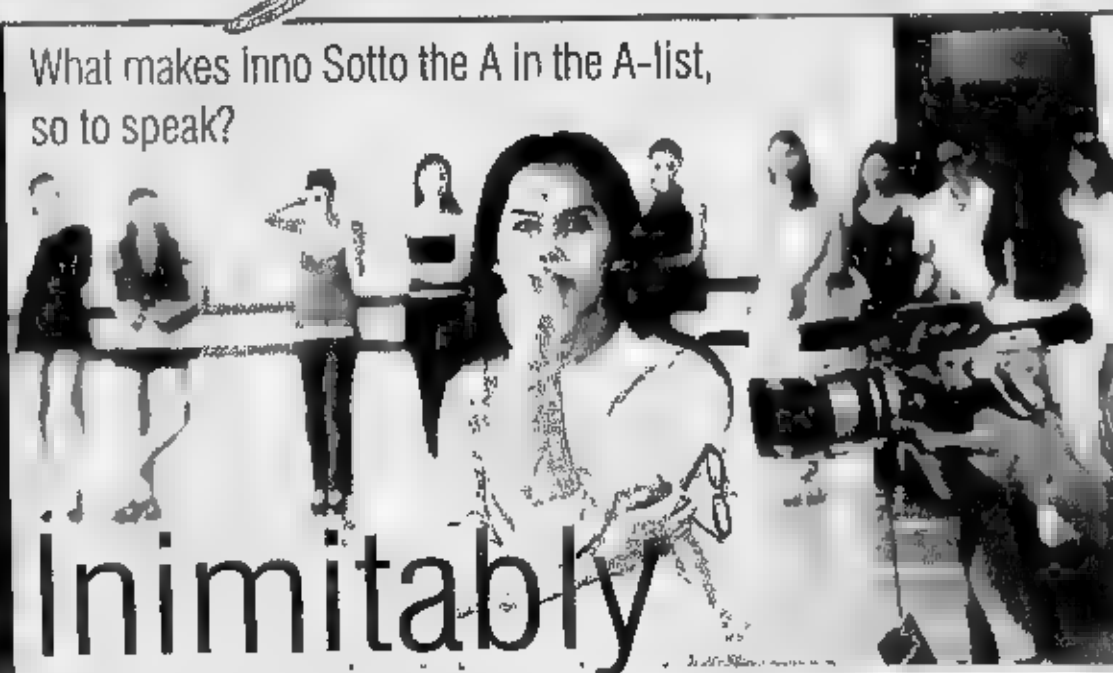
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FASHION

What makes Inno Sotto the A in the A-list, so to speak?



Inimitably

Inno

Photos by Jo Ann Bitagcol

IF THERE'S ONE THING I learned in my years in the fashion industry, it's the fact that it takes more than just great talent to succeed in an industry populated by extremely creative artists. And what's even harder is staying on top of the game.

I've seen designers come with great ideas, only to be crushed by a thump. They can be current favorites one season and history in six months' time. The industry can be very unforgiving, and a designer is usually just as good as his last show. That's why I can't help but admire Inno Sotto, who's been on top of the heap, the A in A-list, so to speak, for many years now.

Several factors make Inno the best in his field. Besides having genuine talent, he also knows who he is and therefore, has identity, which is reflected in his work. When you see his designs, you know that it's by him just as you know that a particular dress is by Oscar de la Renta or Valentino.

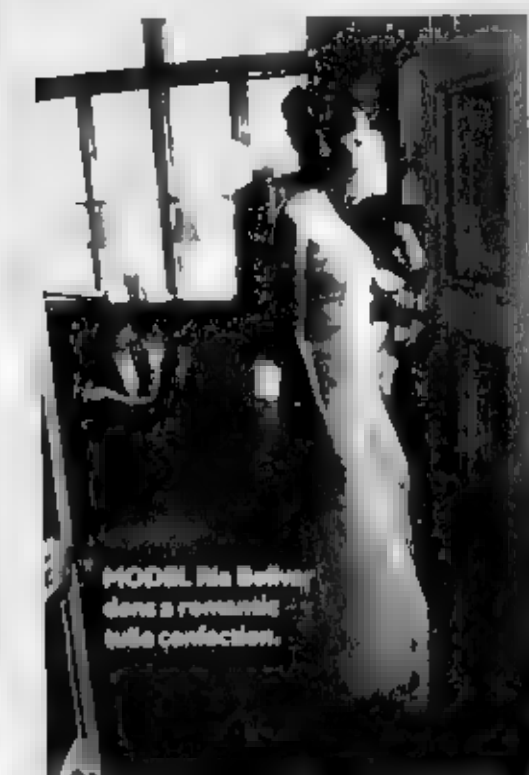
That's not to say that he comes up with the same thing over and over. Fact is, he never fails to evolve and surprise. I've done most of his shows since I started modeling, and I always look forward to wearing and viewing his latest creations, knowing that I'm in for another visual and tactile treat.

What's more, and I've said this time and again, he is a perfectionist who inspires others to do their best at all times. There's no halfway house where Inno is concerned. Every single aspect of a production is given due attention, just as every stitch, hem, drape or bustle is executed seamlessly.

He never fails to show a new collection at least once a year, which is another factor that elevates and separates him from the rest. After "Beloved," his much-applauded show that featured a surreal, postcard-perfect stage, dramatic music and opera-inspired collection, he's set to show his latest pieces via "Allegra, Under the Pink Sky of the Secret Garden," a fashion show that will offer contemporary, romantic pieces set against lush foliage and complemented by 1950s standards performed by a band.

Inno is currently in the thick of preparations, so I tried him to try to see why he remains Manila's top designer. From recordings in MXN studios to fittings in his atelier to workshops in Steps dance studio, here's a sneak peek into Inno's world as he prepares for yet another rousing success.

INIMITABLY/F2



MODEL: Pia Belver
dances a romantic tulle confection.

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STYLE FASHION

Fashion-forward week

From page F4

time, designers had altogether stopped staging big shows to present their collections, after losing their market to foreign brands.

"It was my way of thanking the designers," he explains. "They were my livelihood before. It was my turn to give back." (PFW is among the few, if not the only one, of its kind in the world where designers show at no cost.)

The series was barely on its third year when sponsors stopped coming in. Though throwing in the towel was the easier option, Espino, now with Audie by his side, decided to stay on. By their twosome, they knocked on doors to get sponsors, most times ending up with calloused knuckles.

Espino says sponsors would rather spend on concerts and celebrity mall shows. Even retailers prefer to hire an image model than stage regular shows to present their products.

No state support

After nine years, he has yet to hear from, or approach, the government.

"I could've asked [the government for help] a long time ago," Espino notes. "I did the wedding of Jackie Ejercito, and then the Arroyos. But it's hard. When the administration changes, the project is gone."

"Thailand spends \$50 million for their fashion week... They're not just promoting their beautiful beaches." Other countries in the region, like Hong Kong, Malaysia, India, Singapore, have also been aggressive in promoting fashion, and the world is starting to take notice.

Though the current administration has been bullish in promoting tourism overseas, the country's budget for tourist promotions is paltry compared to its neighbors' fashion-week budgets alone. And it will be a long shot before fashion promotion becomes its priority.

However, Tourism Sec. Ace Durano has told the INQUIRER he is willing to sit down with the organizers to determine what the department can do to help in the future, particularly in sponsoring foreign media and personalities to attend the shows.

"When I learned the DOT secretary was young, I felt happy thinking he might be more open-minded," Espino says. "I was doing

shows abroad with DOT before and I was questioned for showing bridal gowns. Their target tourists were the Japanese who were coming here to get married! They didn't see it as a viable money maker."

Parochial issues

Of course, Espino knows local designers have yet to deal with parochial issues before they can aspire for international attention.

"Some are quite unprofessional. They don't submit sketches on time. Others, just because they're popular, think they're exempt. How can we classify you for the show when we don't see your clothes? We ask them for their forecast, they say 'yes' with an exclamation mark. Then they'll show clothes that have been shot for a magazine 2-3 months before."

"Then there's *patalbugan, taguan nang taguan*. They bring only the lining for the fitting! The show suffers. Some are very good illustrators, but when it comes to construction..." On those who are only in to shock, "they should put an end to that," Espino adds. "The goal is to sell, and in order to sell, you have to be sensible. It's that basic."

Ultimately, he says there's a wealth of talent among local designers. "They have the ideas but no money to back it up so they're incapacitated. They have a hard time putting together 10 clothes as it is, and you can't see a designer's vision and line with only 10 clothes. That's not a collection." Participants at the PFW show an average of 5-10 pieces.

"The designers should be responsible on their own so once we get government support, we can invite international press... Sass and Bide (of Australia) started in their local fashion week. When Vogue UK came in and Harrods read the review, they ordered. Now they're in Paris and New York."

That's, of course, the promise of a good review. In a struggling industry like this, Espino agrees reviews are there, in part, to weed out the good from the bad.

Espino believes reviews had been instrumental to getting more sensible designs this year.

As for the proof, the country has the next 10 days to find out.

E-mail: cmoral@inquirer.com.ph

Philippine Fashion Week will run at the NBC Tent, March 31-April 4, and at the Glorietta Activity Center, April 5-9

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MODEL NINA NAVAL



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MAKEUP ARTIST TATIAN YANG
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STYLIST STEF CABAL
MAKEUP ARTIST TATIAN YANG
MODEL NINA NAVAL

Fashion-forward week

By Cheche V. Moral

IN SPIRIT, OR BE cause, of two men's unflagging efforts, Philippine Fashion Week (PFW) has thrived and is well on its ninth season as the annual 10-day series of shows opens tonight at the NBC Tent in Taguig.

From the 88 designers who have shown their wares last year, the roster has grown to 110 this year. The improved number shows that designers recognize the series has been effective in promoting their work and widening their market.

That increase, however, is only superficial since the country needs to establish a true local fashion industry and a steady market for Filipino designers. And Joey Espino, co-producer and progenitor of the PFW series, acknowledges that.

Fashion week, of course, is a

global concept whose aim isn't only to present trends but also to provide a marketplace where designers and retailers can present their wares to buyers, not just locally but perhaps more crucial overseas.

While that is, in fact, the Espino's objective (Joey's partner in runway Productions is brother Audie), their limited resources have only been able to take them so far. And that's only so far as keeping the annual shows alive.

However small, the main goal is for the designers to sell. "Espino says, 'Otherwise when the goods from China come in, Philippine fashion is a goner.'"

He has soldiered on in spite of the difficulties because "if I don't do it, who will? My only options are to do it in a very limited version, or not do it altogether. For nine years, I've not been getting paid my director's fee... We're the organizers and also the producers, so we answer for everything."

Privately organized, the annual Fashion Week has yet to get government support

Espino's motives sound admirably altruistic, and it's vital to look back where he's coming from.

Giving back

Nine years ago, Espino, a fashion show director, was lured by a mall chain to stage shows in a

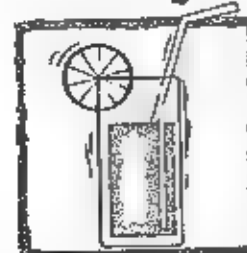
Makati mall in the hopes of renewing interest in local retail. Patterned after the weekly shows held in such big malls as the Landmark in Hong Kong, the project was indeed promising. Espino would also later include a handful of designers in the shows. At the

9 YEARS/F3

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Handprint Fan, Libreng Pampapresko!



Welcome Drink, Libreng Pampalamig!

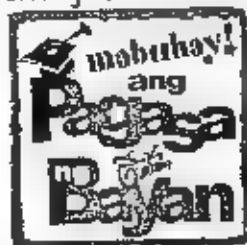


Stuffed Toy, Libreng Pampaaliw!



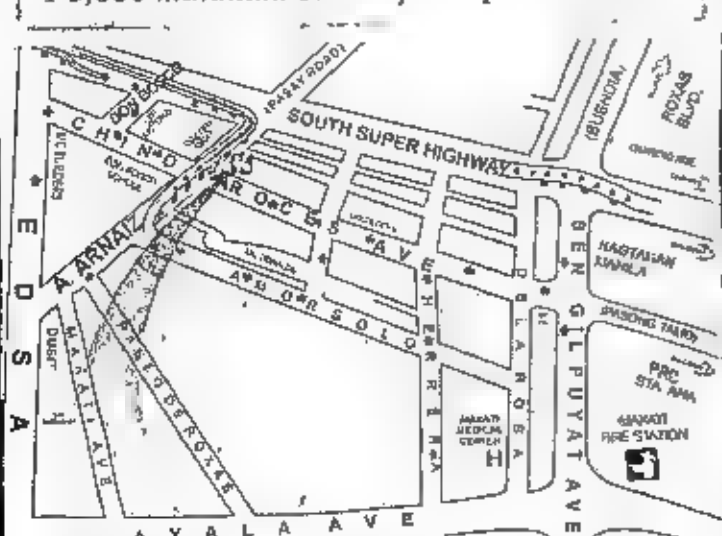
Sugpo Mantecado, Libreng Pampabusog!

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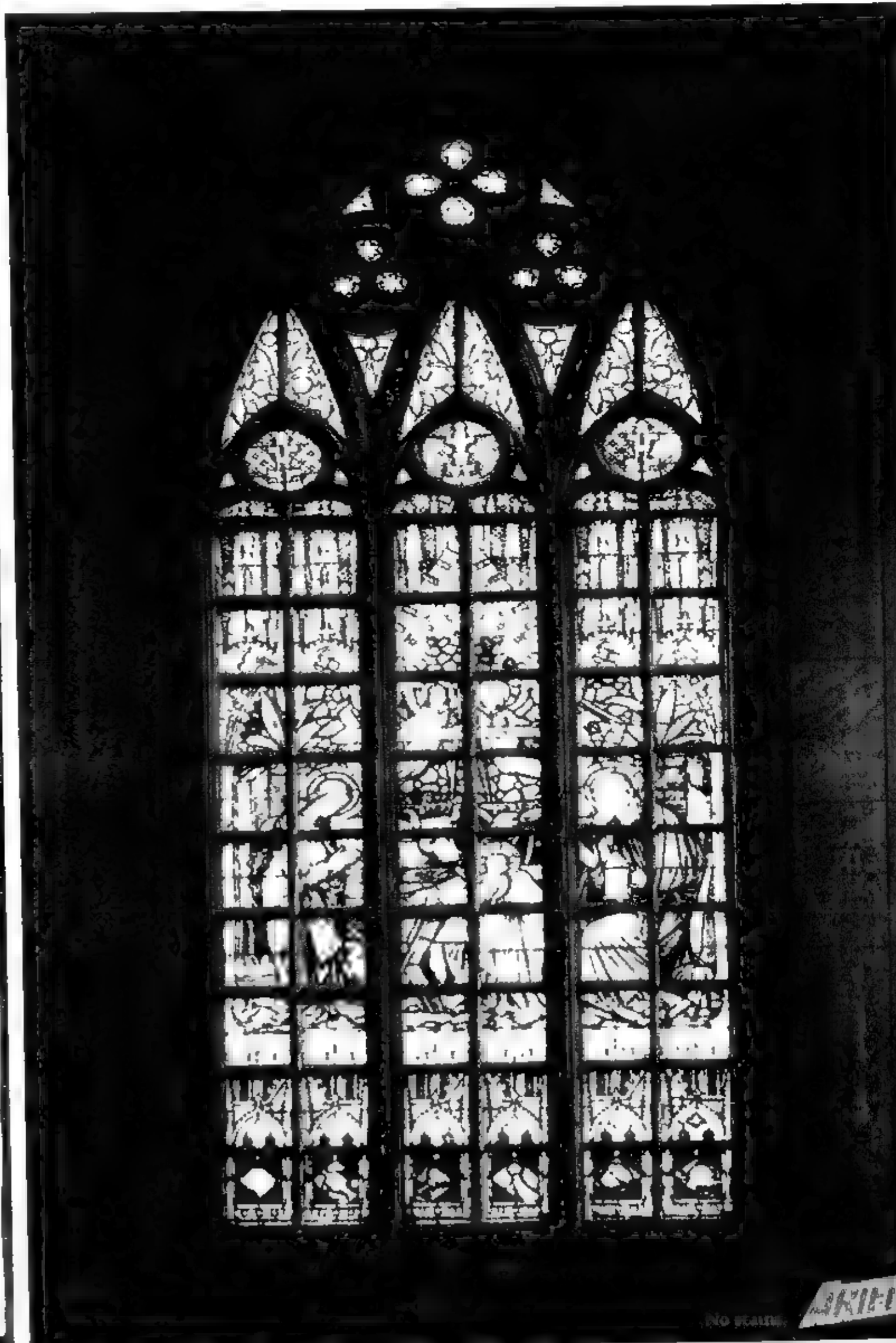


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LIFE STYLE



and intimate this Summer

Bench and Human
have got you covered
on this season of skin

By Cheche V. Moral
Photos by Betty Johnson and Rudy Esperas

IT'S 36°C OUTSIDE, AND IT'S hard to keep your cool when you feel you're nearing combustion. The hellish heat makes you long for escape. Any place but here!

Then you travel to a place where it's 13°C several days before it's officially spring and, once again, you wish you were back in the same place you were trying to flee from: the warm comfort of home.

As people used to living in cold places would say, you don't really feel the bitterness of cold if you're properly dressed—layers upon layers of synthetic fabrics, wools, and cashmeres and furs, if you can afford them.

It's the same thing when living in the tropics. In fact, you have to count your blessings: We don't need to swathe ourselves in expensive animal pelts and skins to survive the searing temperatures.

The solution isn't so extreme as tearing your clothes off (though when you're at the end of your delirious wits, that may be tempting), but as simple as picking the appropriate clothing fabrics for the weather. You shed off tight, stuffy clothes and go for looser cuts. You're going for ease, after all.

Top fabric of choice for summer, of course, is cotton, cotton and cotton. It's affordable and widely available,

and used in everything from underwear to bath towels. It's soft, comfortable and drapes well. Since the material retains color well, cotton clothes come in every imaginable print, which is just the answer to those looking to quench their color-parched summer wardrobes.

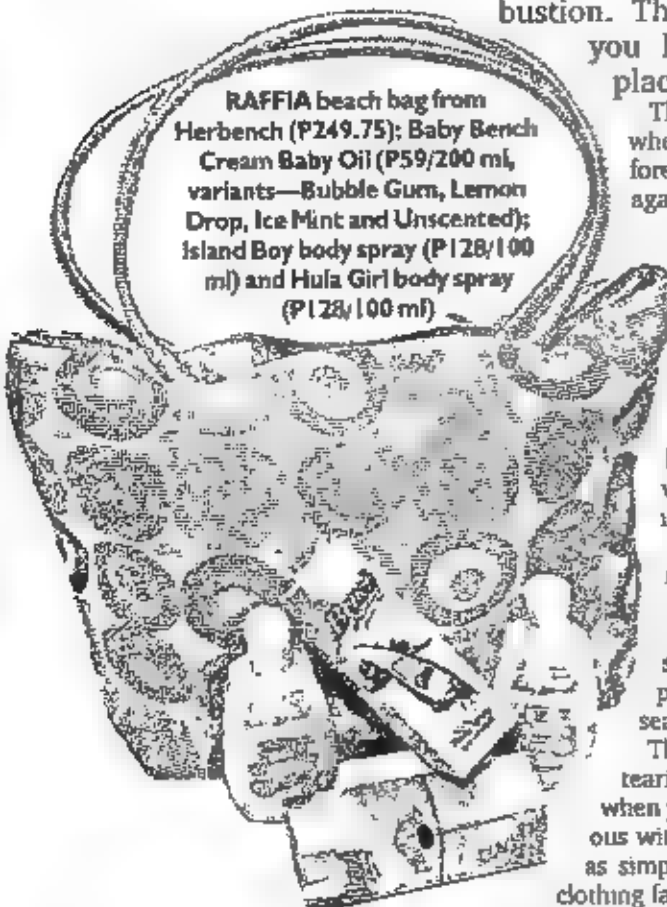
As fashion and lifestyle shops like Bench and Human, they got you, well, covered head to foot with their Summer 2006 collections.

For the ladies, there are all-cotton cami and panty sets, in stripes or with lace trimmings. The men can opt for classic briefs or boxers, in bold stripes or solid colors, also all made of cotton.

Human and Bench each have new collections of bloom-printed beach and board shorts. To ward off the sun's glare, they have new sun visors and trusty baseball caps, and reversible fishermen's hats. There are also multicolored flip-flops for every day or for those trips to the beach. Some styles from

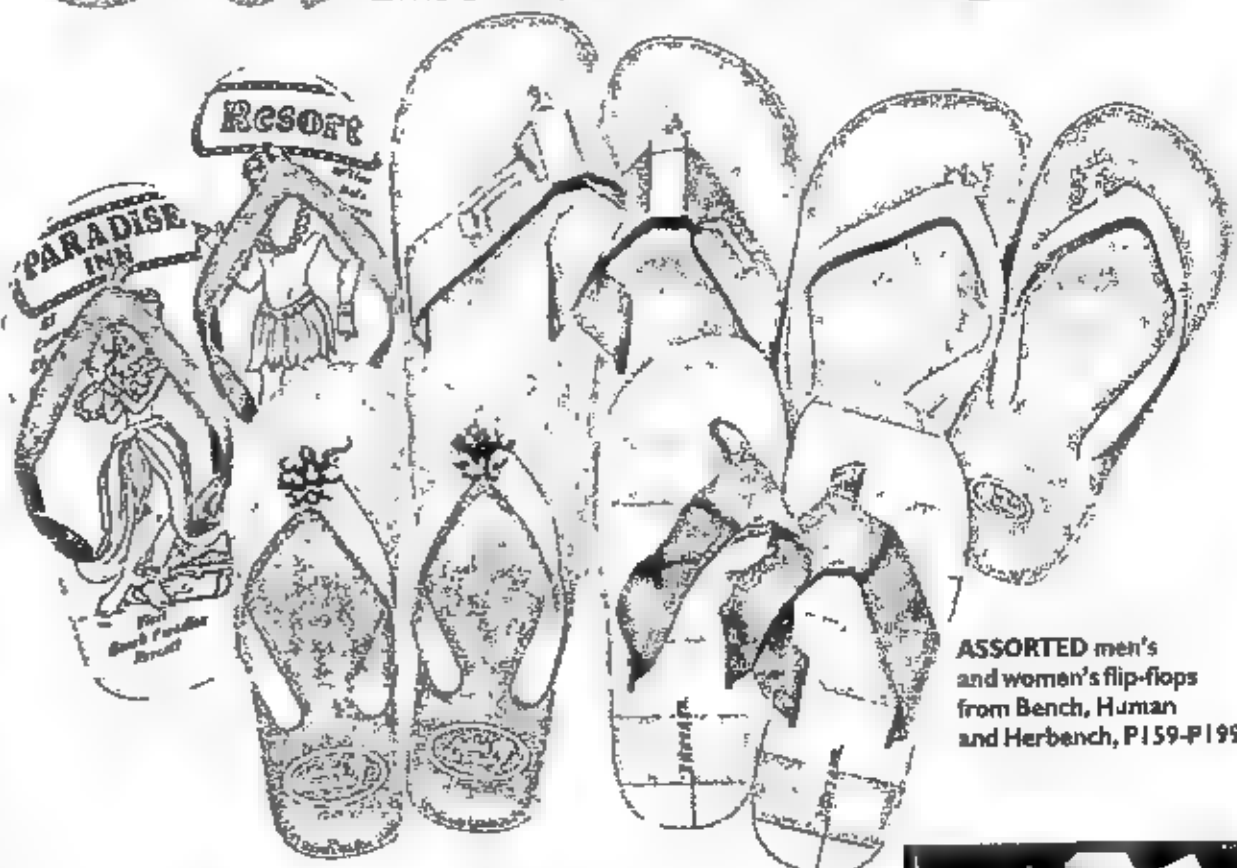
Herbench also have bead accents.

Bench also introduces its cream baby oils, and two new fragrances for summer—Hula Girl and Island Boy.

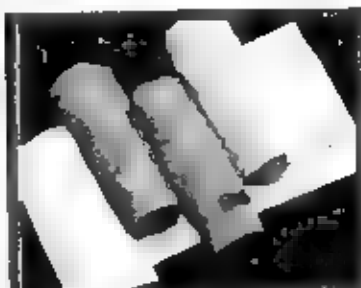


RAFFIA beach bag from Herbench (P249.75); Baby Bench Cream Baby Oil (P59/200 ml, variants—Bubble Gum, Lemon Drop, Ice Mint and Unscented); Island Boy body spray (P128/100 ml) and Hula Girl body spray (P128/100 ml)

LACE-TRIMMED camisoles (P329.75 each) with matching low-rise panties (P169.75), all from Herbench



ASSORTED men's and women's flip-flops from Bench, Human and Herbench, P159-P199



BENCH & Bath 100-percent cotton towels, P399 each. Available colors: cyber yellow, insignia blue, light pink, rococo red, sweet lavender, cerulean, wild lime, holly green, midnight blue and steel gray



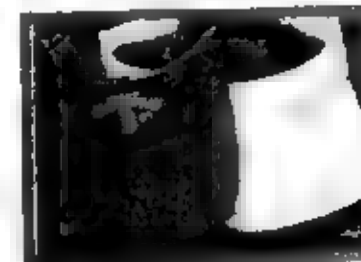
BENCH reversible fishermen's hat, P239.75 each



ASSORTED bags with pop art designs from Human, P249-P599



STRIPED boxer briefs (P199.75 each) and classic briefs (P169.75 each), all from Bench



SUN VISORS from Bench (P179.75, left) and Human (P179)



BEACH shorts for the ladies, P429.75, from Human



MEN'S beach shorts from Human, P429.75 each



HERBENCH V-neck cami, P279.75, and mid-rise hipster panties, P149.75



BASEBALL caps from Bench and Human, P199.75-P229

ON BIANCA and Angelica: "Made in Paradise" graphic tee, P329.75; low-rise hipster with hula monogram print, P159.75



Bench's angels

By Pam Pastor

BIANCA KING AND ANGELICA PANGANIBAN have a number of things in common. Youth. Good looks. Careers in show business. The passion for what they do. And now, their roles as the new image models of Bench Body.

Along with Alessandra de Rossi, they will be representing the brand's teenage segment. "Aside from being two of the hottest young stars in local show business, the two reflect the fashion sense and style of the brand, which makes the market to easily draw association from them," the people from Bench said.

On this page, the gorgeous pair models pieces from Bench Body's Summer 2006 Collection—bright colors, various designs and nature-inspired tropical looks that fit Bench's "Made in Paradise" summer campaign.

Bianca King

Bianca King isn't new to modeling. She started at 14, posing for fashion editorials in glossies. Although offers to enter show business immediately flooded her, she chose school first, waiting until she finished her freshman year in college before giving acting a shot.

Although she originally just thought of show business as a summer job, it soon turned into more than that. "I'm passionate about proving my worth and talent in the business and getting good projects," she says.

Bianca is enjoying life as an actress. "The best thing is that I feel I help so many people in so many different ways. It helps me mature and become a wiser person in dealing with people, money, gossip, pain, so many things. I help other people through the little things I do on TV and film. Someone actually appreciates it and gets entertained. I make them happy by doing what I love doing."

She's also glad that it has given her the chance to help her family. "Since I started earning my own money, I totally stopped being a spoiled brat to my parents and now I feel I have to return it all to them. Not because they

LACE with mesh V-neck strap tee, P249.75, and low-rise hipster with hula monogram print, P159.75



ask me to or I have to, but because I don't want to be selfish with the blessings I receive now."

Bianca is currently part of the new season of GMA 7's "Love to Love" and is shooting a movie with Mikey Arroyo. She has a lot of plans and hopes for her career. "Dyesebel" would be a nice project to do. I'm such a water baby and beach bum that I feel I'd be perfect for the role. I always secretly thought when I was a kid that I was mermaid when I would jump off my dad's boat in the middle of the

sea, no matter how deep the water was."

Unlike kids who grew up in show business, Bianca has had to deal with things that her peers who have lived in the public eye do not have to face. "Not having grown up in show biz and going to school in Alabang, I'm sorely misunderstood. There's just this wild misconception of me being so *soyal* and stuck-up that sometimes people tend to believe the chismus about me being a brat and *matapobre*. But the truth is, I come from a very average, normal family. We're not rich at all. My parents just happen to work hard so they were able to send me to good schools. I do not look down on people and I know *wala akong ipagmamayabang* but my strong character, values and street smarts."

It's with the same values that she faces endorsement offers. "I turned down a few offers to endorse other local brands because I always thought it would be better to save myself for something I really believe in and that I would actually patronize, and not just take the talent fee and go shopping somewhere else."

It was Bench that finally got the nod. "It was worth the wait," Bianca says.

When asked what her favorite pieces from Bench Body are, she says, "The underwear is amazing. It can very well compete with imported, expensive brands. I only used to wear the imported stuff but now I never have to spend on expensive underwear again."

Did she find modeling underwear difficult? "It wasn't hard to model Bench underwear because the ones we wore were cute, candy-colored girly designs. It hardly felt like underwear, it was more like swimwear."

When Bianca's not working, she likes going out of town for wakeboarding. "I also go to the mall, but not for shopping. I hang out in bookstores and browse through music stores. I also work out at Gold's Gym with a trainer and do Bikram Yoga. At home I watch a lot of local TV and tend to my pets."

Asked about her style off-camera, she says,

BENCH/3



COTTON graphic tee with patch, P329.75

Name: Angelica Panganiban

Nickname: Angela, Jelai
 Birthday: November 4, 1986
 Age: 19
 Hobbies: shopping, fixing my closet, watching DVDs
 One word to describe yourself: mysterious
 Favorite movies: "Wicker Park," "What's Eating Gilbert Grape?," "Sweet November," "City of Angels," "The Notebook"
 Favorite TV shows: "Friends," "Laguna Beach"
 Favorite books: "A Walk to Remember," "Harry Potter" books, books of David Pelzer
 Favorite food: Japanese food, seafood, shrimp, crab
 What's in your iPod? Reggae, slow rock
 Summer must-haves: super nice two-piece swimwear
 What can't you leave home without? Cell phone, wallet
 Favorite Bench Body product: undies and bras
 Dream vacation: Amanpulo
 Ultimate goal: Just to give whatever my family needs



COTTON graphic tee, P349.75

Name: Bianca Charlotte A. King

Nickname: Bee
 Birthday: March 18, 1986
 Age: 20
 Hobbies: watching DVDs and local TV, wakeboarding
 One word to describe yourself: relaxed
 Favorite movies: "The Goonies," "Cruel Intentions," "Dirty Dancing"
 Favorite TV shows: "The OC," "Laguna Beach," "Lost," "TRL" on MTV
 Favorite books: "Harry Potter" series
 Favorite food: Peking duck, *fachon*, burritos, smoked salmon
 What's in your iPod? I have everything—a lot of house, alternative, R&B, hip-hop, senti, oldies
 Summer must-haves: a gorgeous tan, weekly trips to the beach, exercise
 What can't you leave home without? Driver's license, cell phone, ATM
 Favorite Bench Body product: all the underwear and nipple tape
 Dream vacation: Brazil, the Bahamas, Maldives, Egypt
 Ultimate goal: To marry the man I love and have beautiful children

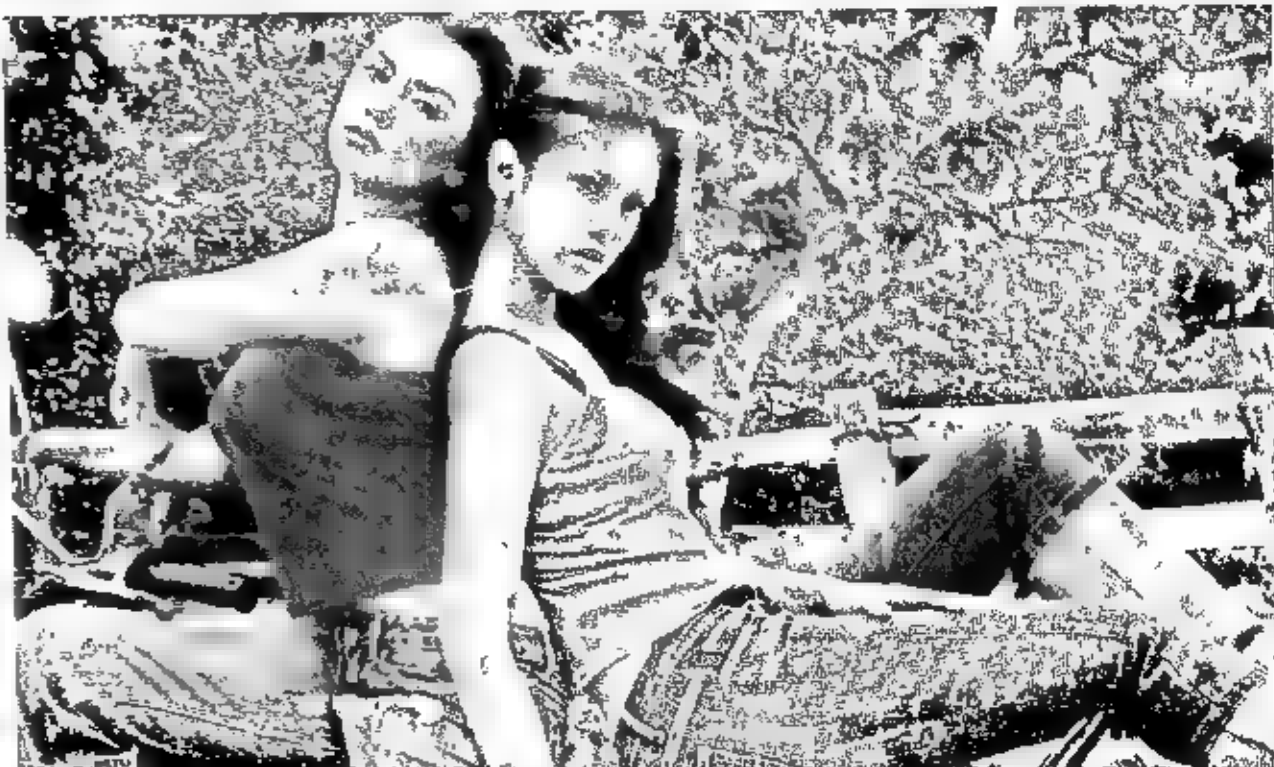
Get to know a pair of heavenly bodies—in their own words



COTTON spandex graphic tee, P379.75, and low-rise hipster with hula monogram print, P159.75



LACE with mesh V-neck strap tee, P249.75; over striped push-up bra, P279.75; low-rise hipster with hula monogram print, P159.75



ON ANGELICA and Bianca: lace with mesh V-neck strap tee, P249.75 On Angelica (bottoms): B/lw Overhauled denim P699.75. On Bianca (bottoms): Overhauled booty cut pants, P699.75

Bench's angels

From page 2

"My style is very schizophrenic. I can wear it all and have tried it all. From girly to preppy, bohemian, beachy, sporty, sassy, jolags, trendy and baduy. But generally, I'm very laid-back. A Bench T-shirt, shorts and Havaianas lang, no makeup, happy na ako. I hate wearing heels! I started wearing flats with everything last year—even to formal events. I just make sure they suit the outfit and don't look tacky. I embrace my shortness."

Angelica Panganiban

Angelica Panganiban literally grew up before our eyes. She started her career in show business in 1993, when she was only 6 years old. Since then, she has been in a lot of movies and TV shows and has a lot of fans across the country.

Despite detesting *chismis*—the bane of everyone in her industry—Angelica is in love with her craft and says her work is her biggest passion. "I love acting. I enjoy my work especially when I act. I love acting, doing so many roles. *Puede akong magiba't ibang tao* in one life lang."

She is looking forward to more challenging roles, perhaps to follow in the paths of people she looks up to—"Vilma Santos, Maricel Soriano and Claudine Barretto." Angelica says, "I want to play a retardate or a hopeless addict, *yung malala na tauaga*."

This girl takes her job seriously. She is currently busy every day training in *wushu* for a new ABS-CBN show.

Her new role as a Bench image model is also a new highlight in her career.

Angelica says posing for pictorials is easier than acting, which is why she enjoyed the Bench pictorial immensely. "*Masaya! Siguro kasi sobrang saya kasama ng group, out of town pa ginawa. Parang nga we were playing lang, parang walang work.*"

"I'm super happy and flattered, kasi being with the Bench family, parang you're a star na. Kasi for me, they won't get you kung wala kang X-factor," says Angelica.

She loves Bench Body underwear. "The bras are super colorful and wholesome."

When she takes a break from work, Angelica goes out of town. And when she's off-camera, her style is laid-back. "I wear jeans and shirts. I don't go for a tado outfit. *Mas comfortable kasi pag shirt lang or sando lang suot mo.*"



With Bench Body long bra, P149.75; over push-up bra, P279.75; striped monogram bikini, P149.75



Summer 2006

www.otto.com Greenbelt Rockwell Shangri-la Podium Gateway Alabang Town Center

Think light and breezy feminine, and get ready for your summer fling with Kashieca



SUMMER SMILE. Georgina Wilson in short-sleeved, collared pique tee and mid-length floral skirt

Preppie but flirty

By Irene C. Perez

SUMMER IS HERE, FORGET THE VAMPY look and put those heavy knit tops, tight jeans and knee-high boots back in the closet. Be at your chic-est best in hip, comfy clothes, but please, we're not talking about another boho overkill here.

We're talking about floral prints, basic tees and collared shirts in candy colors—all available in Kashieca's summer collection. Throw in striped tees, collared woven tops and ruffled blouses in pastels for dressier days.

Kashieca, the latest baby among Bench's fashion caboodle, recently launched its summer collection, projecting a "laid-back, preppy country" look.



CYAN short-sleeved pique tee with collar

Pair that cotton tee with capri pants and flip-flops for a fresh daytime getup. At night, get funky with an embellished top, gauchos and lace-up wedges.

Now that accessorizing has been a skill (either you make 'em or decorate yourselves with them), go from blah to glam with a bead necklace or multi-strand pearl chain. Add a flirty school-girl touch to your wardrobe with a colorful pompom necklace.

Summer must-have

And what better way to carry your beach essentials than with the Kashieca embroidered mesh bag? Stuff your kitay kit, sun-block, coin purse, cell phone and mp3 player into this pretty nylon mesh bag.

The Kashieca mesh bag, which comes in hot pink and navy blue, also makes for city-trotting, and adds a fun, sunny touch to your basic attire.

This must-have retails for P200, but as a summer blow-out, you could get this baby free until April 30 with every P1,500 single-receipt purchase of regular Kashieca items, and at P120 with every P1,200 purchase.

Quiet charmer

You need not bare too much skin to look hot. Kashieca leans toward a clean-cut look with a quaint feminine charm. Be confident and self-assured, but sport a slight hint of naughtiness.

Kashieca image model Georgina Wilson embodies just that. Although a self-admitted "girly-girl" of a fashionista, don't mistake this 5'10" chick as just another pretty face.

The Britain-born Filipina was a consistent A-student since her Assumption grade-school days till she got her economics degree at Ateneo de Manila University. She's now getting a double degree in finance and accounting at the University of Sydney.

The 20-year-old's youthful face is probably one of the most noticeable among the billboards you pass by Edsa. She's a refreshing sight in the middle of traffic.

Reinventing chic

Upon the acquisition of Bench last year, Kashieca renewed its stand as a fashion brand—with fresher, more streamlined items ideal for students and yuppies. Old customers welcomed the comeback, new ones are enjoying the reinvented style.

Last year's collection attracted a wide range of women—from teenagers to those in their early 40s. And oh, even if you are an XS or a plus-size XXL, Kashieca could sure dress you up.

Charge up your wardrobe with items from Kashieca's collection. Think fresh, feminine and flirty, and get ready for your summer fling.

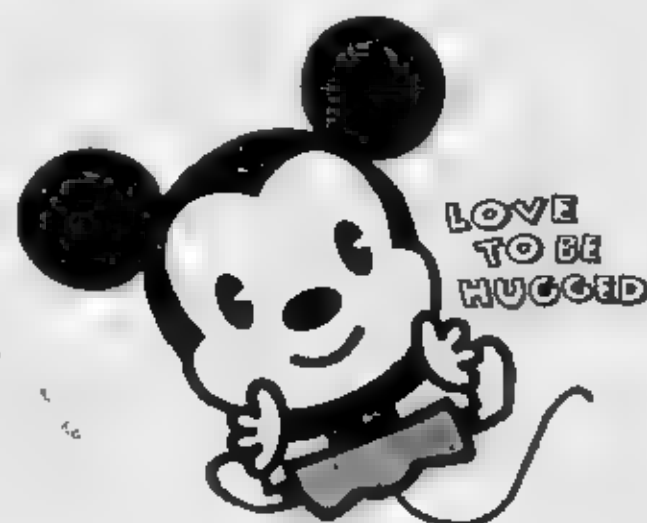
Kashieca is available at Power Plant Mall, Glorietta, The Podium, Gateway Mall, Shangri-La Plaza Mall, Alabang Town Center, Robinson's Place Manila and Galleria; SM San Lazaro, Manila, Sta. Mesa, North Edsa, Bicutan and Sta. Rosa.



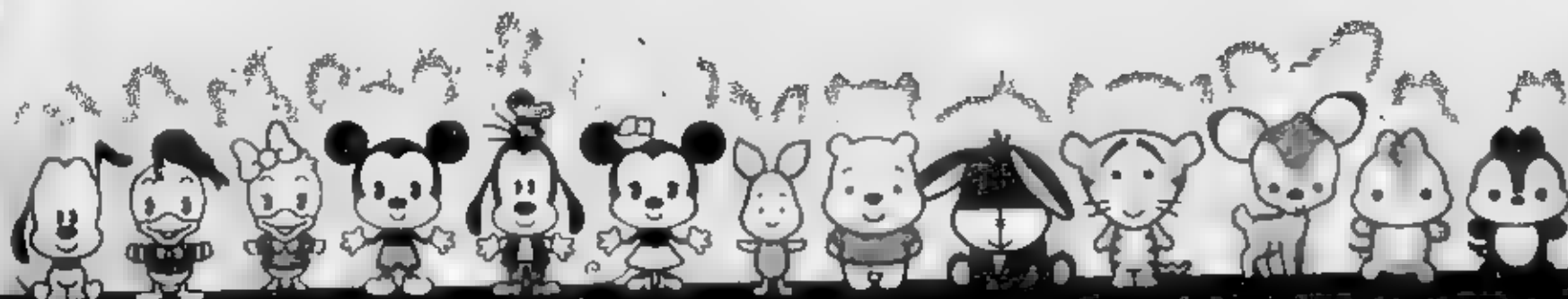
SUMMER must-have Kashieca mesh bag



STRIPED 3/4-sleeved polo and cropped pants



Bench



Is it a CRIME to be this cute?

© Disney

At play with fashionable twosome

A Thai fashion house shows why Tim Yap and Celine Lopez deserve each other

FOR TIM YAP AND CELINE Lopez, it's another feather in their fedora hats, and something to add in their "things in common" list.

Both fashion and events columnists by day and party people by night, Tim and Celine are Playhound's very first endorsers in the Philippines. The ubiquitous twosome were chosen by the top Thai brand, franchised by Bench in the country, for their forward-thinking style and unique fashion sense—and because they embody the elite clubbing set.

"Playhound is our more playful brand targeted at the younger market, while Greyhound is more for work and the mature set. But they also have party wear," says Suyen Lum, Playhound product manager.

And so it was party, party, party for three Fridays of March at Embassy, where the two new faces of Playhound were launched, and where even the waiters donned Playhound shirts. Button pins bearing the brand's name were given away to guests, while Playhound VIP cardholders were treated to a free drink.

The brand Greyhound was founded in 1980 in Thailand, starting with only a men's casual-wear line. Semi-formals for men followed, the women's line, accessories and footwear came 10 years after. It was only in 2002 when Playhound, the trendier and more avant-garde version, was born.

Summer line

In April, Playhound and Greyhound will unveil a bold summer collection bearing strong Eastern influences: wide sleeves and lifted collars reminiscent of kimonos dominate Playhound's line. Colors are bright and sunny; prints are somewhat opulent with the use of Japanese fabrics.

The Playhound design team also put new perspective to paper, which they transformed from mere object to artful detail—from tissue paper layered into the clothes, discarded strips of paper intertwined to form a new material used in accessories, to the candid use of a flimsy piece of paper stitched on to a T-shirt or jeans.

Tunics, Indian florals and sari-inspired outfits will be seen in Greyhound's East-meets-West theme. There are also skinny jeans, loose trousers, pencil skirts for ladies and fitted trousers for men. Tones are more understated with pastel blues, dark browns, khakis and deep greens.

To make shopping even more exciting, Playhound offers a promo where every P1,000 purchase of any Playhound or Greyhound item, entitles you to a raffle stub that can win you round-trip tickets for two to Bangkok, with hotel accommodation for three days and two nights!

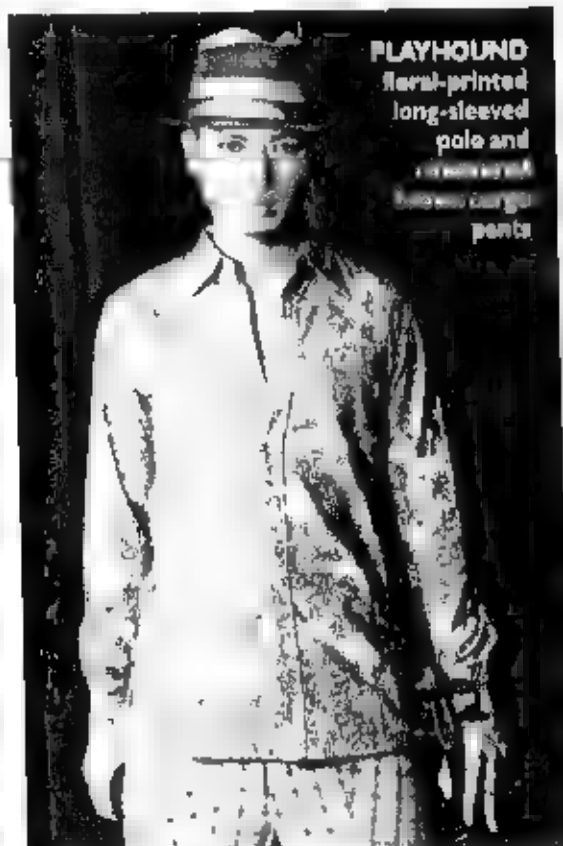
"Bangkok is very much a fashion city. It's underestimated by some who think that high-end Asian brands are not as good as Europeans', but they [Thai] make really good clothes. It's nice to get acquainted with the fashion of the city," says Lum.

You have the whole of summer to shop and increase your chances of winning since the promo period runs from April 1-June 18.

Deadline of submission of entries is on June 18, 7 p.m., at the designated drop box in Playhound, G/R Glorietta 3, Ayala Center, Makati. Winners will be drawn on June 21, at Suyen Corp. head office, 2214 Toriberto St., Pasay City, 3 p.m., with the presence of both DTL and Suyen Corp. representatives.

Since Playhound clothes cost more than a thousand bucks each, you're sure to get at least one stab at winning the raffle. *Allison Lopez*

CELINE in checkered Greyhound poncho over spaghetti-strap top with satin layer, and skinny trousers with cargo pockets. Tim in Greyhound cotton long-sleeved tee over short-sleeved polo with placket detail.



PLAYHOUND floral-printed long-sleeved polo and cargo pants

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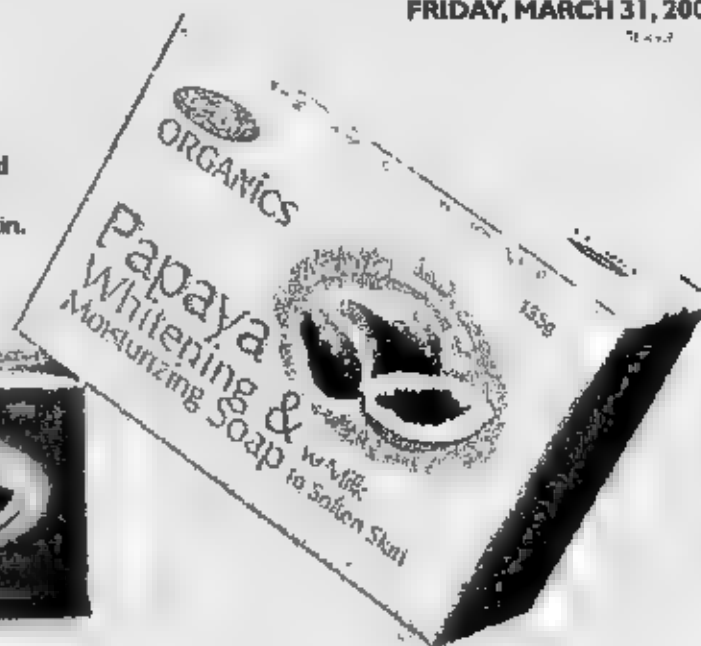
ON CELINE: Crocheted long-sleeved shirt with patchwork details, and skirt with puffball layers. **On Tim:** long-sleeved cotton tee with cut-and-sew details and raw edges, and checkered trousers



THIS gentle body scrub has extracts of papaya and bearberry to keep skin fair and refreshed.



BENCH Organics' soaps are especially formulated with natural seaweed extract to tighten the skin.



Whiter than ever

Bench Organics joins the skin-whitening bandwagon

Text by Vangie Baga-Reyes
Photos by Ryan Lim

IS THE MARKET READY FOR ANOTHER skin-whitening range?

Bench Organics, the all-natural skin and body care line of Bench, believes there's ample room for its newly launched line of skin-whitening products that promise Filipino women a fairer complexion like no other.

Yes, Bench Organics has found a gap in the current market offerings—the absence of a complete natural body-care range that combines the benefits of whitening, moisturizing and firming.

"Asian women in general want to have fairer skin," says Michael Angelo Roaring, brand manager of Suyen Corporation, the mother company of Bench, HerBench and Human. "With our new skin-whitening products we answer the demand of clients who want to improve their skin texture and at the same time nourish and feed their skin."

The lightening line includes Papaya Whitening and Firming Soap, Papaya Whitening and Firming Body Scrub, Papaya Whitening and Firming Lotion, and Papaya Whitening and Firming Dry Oil Mist.

Roaring explains Bench Organics products have been developed to elevate the act of daily bathing into a complete cleansing and rejuvenating experience. From a soap and body scrub that naturally firms, whitens and moisturizes the skin, to a body mist and lotion that calms the mind and relaxes the senses.

Bench Organics' soap is entirely made by hand. It's also completely biodegradable and does not contain preservatives or harsh drying compounds common to commercially available soaps. It has the finest papaya and bearberry extracts that gently exfoliate and whiten skin, while seaweed extract tightens skin. It has two sizes: 45 g (P20) and 135 g (P49).

The lotion restores skin's natural glow with special formulation also from papaya, bearberry and seaweed. The 95-g tube is available for only P85.

The body scrub contains apricot seeds that exfoliate dead skin cells. The seaweed extract makes the skin firm. The scrub is available at 200 g for P179.

The oil mist is a non-greasy dry-oil mist that seals in the skin's moisture through the moisturizing properties of natural olive oil. It is enriched with papaya extract to whiten and replenish skin lipids lost after bathing. It's also enriched with vitamin E. The 120-ml bottle costs P159.

Roaring assures consumers that all its products are made from natural and organic ingredients.

"We believe very strongly that what we put on skin should be organic, non-invasive, non-toxic and non-irritant to our body to ensure that it forms a vital part of the way our skin looks and feels," says Roaring.

The complete Papaya Whitening range of Bench Organics products is now available at Bench, HerBench, SuperBench, BenchBody and PCX.

bench/

Made in Paradise



PAPAYA Whitening and Firming dry oil mist and lotion rejuvenate and restore youthful skin.

www.benchinc.com

ABENSON Cool Summer

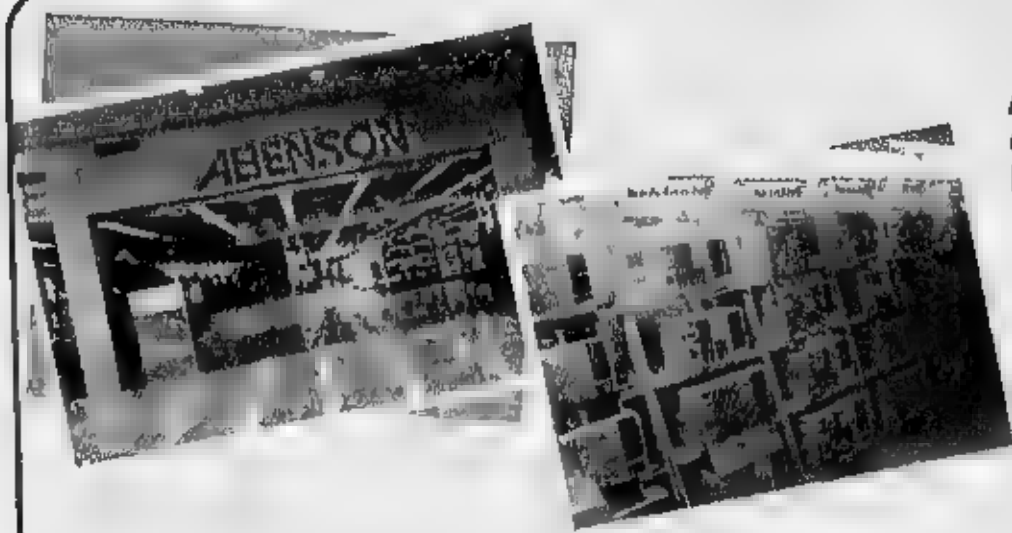
Beat the Heat with these Exciting Deals and Offers!

0%

Interest Installment

Cool Freebies

Super Savings Deals!



Are you ready for the heat of summer? Need something to cool you down? Well, here's a great deal, **JUST FOR YOU!** Get a **FREE Electric Fan** when you purchase any of the participating air con brands at any Abenson branch!

* Per DTI NCR Permit Number 1655 series of 2006

TIPS ON HOW TO CHOOSE THE RIGHT AIR CON:

When choosing your air con, do not base your decision solely on the **PRICE** of the unit. Here are some tips that will help you get the **BEST VALUE** for your money. You will actually save more money in the long run if you choose wisely!

1.) Pick the Right Size of Air Con for your Room

To maximize the cooling capacity of your air conditioner, you have to make sure that you bought the right air con for the right room size. Buying a 0.5 horsepower unit for your home theater measuring 30 square meters would make you end up literally sweating with frustration. So before you go to Abenson and buy your air con, measure your room. Below is the recommended cooling power for specific room sizes:

ALWAYS remember:
*If Undersized, the air con works harder and the room will not cool as desired.
*If Oversized, the air con unit will consume more energy than needed, and you will pay more than you should.

To estimate a unit's power consumption:

Wattage = Kilowatts x Ave. Runtime hr

* Est. Hourly consumption

Consider getting an air con with advanced energy-saving features such as a programmable Timer and Energy Saving Plug.

3.) Air Cons should be Durable and Reliable

Your air con unit should be designed for many years of use. To determine whether an air con is durable and reliable, check the following parts:
a. Compressor and Motor (Are they made by a reliable manufacturer?)
b. Motor, Bee Fan, Coil, Outer Wrapper (Make a visual check on the quality and workmanship as rust is likely to occur in these parts.)

Some air con brands are manufactured with optimized anti-rust technology, making the unit more durable and resistant to rust for many years.

4.) Know the Reputation of the Company behind the Brand Name

With so many brands available in the market, you may get confused in choosing your air con. We recommend that you consider the following:

- Know the local company behind the brand name. Does it have a good and solid track record? How many years have they been in operation?
- Will the company be able to back up its Product Warranty claim?
- Does it provide customer service support such as a 24-hour Call Center and Nationwide Service Centers?
- Will Spare Parts be available when you need it? A company that manufactures air cons locally can assure you of spare parts availability.

Now that you're equipped to make a wise decision, go to the nearest ABENSON store to buy your air con! Our friendly employees will be more than happy to assist you with your every need.

A Consumer Friendly advice from Concepcion-Carrier Air Conditioning Co. and ABENSON

FREE Desk Fan

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Panasonic

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FREE Stand Fan

***Terms and Conditions Apply**

FREE Installation

Whirlpool
Panasonic
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Room Size	Horse Power
Below 10 sq m	~0.50 hp
11 to 14 sq m	~0.75 hp
14 to 19 sq m	~1.00 hp
20 to 25 sq m	~1.50 hp
26 to 36 sq m	~2.00 hp
37 to 45 sq m	~2.50 hp

2.) Think Energy Efficiency

Not all air cons are manufactured the same way. Some are more energy efficient than others. It is important to take note of the unit's **Energy Efficiency Ratio (EER)**.

The General Rule is - "The higher the EER, the less energy the unit consumes"

While we normally look at the air con's Horsepower (HP), it is good to take note of the unit's Wattage (Watts).

SANYO



If it takes
43 muscles
to frown,



but only
17 muscles
to smile,

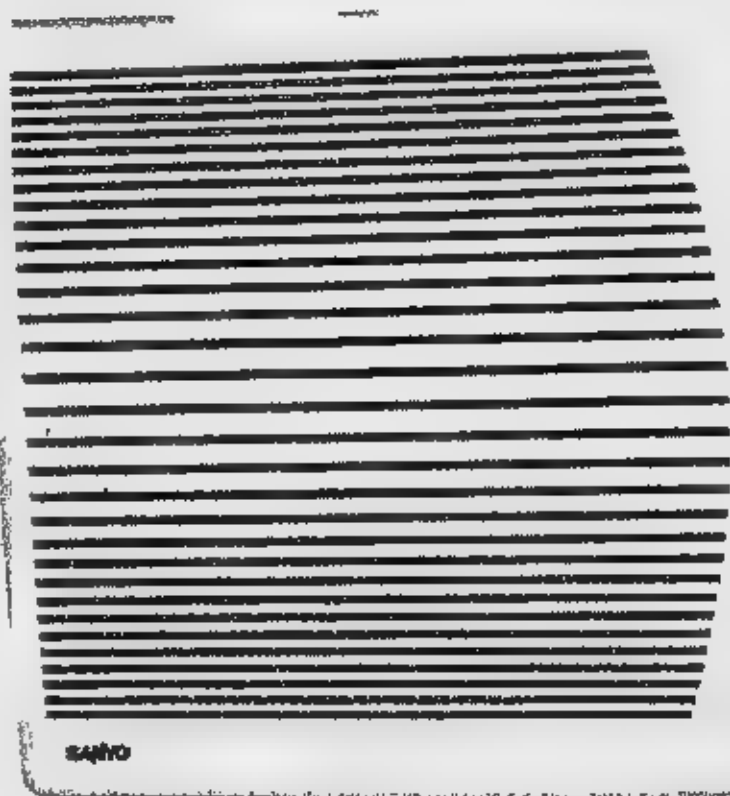


what does
it take to
keep your cool?

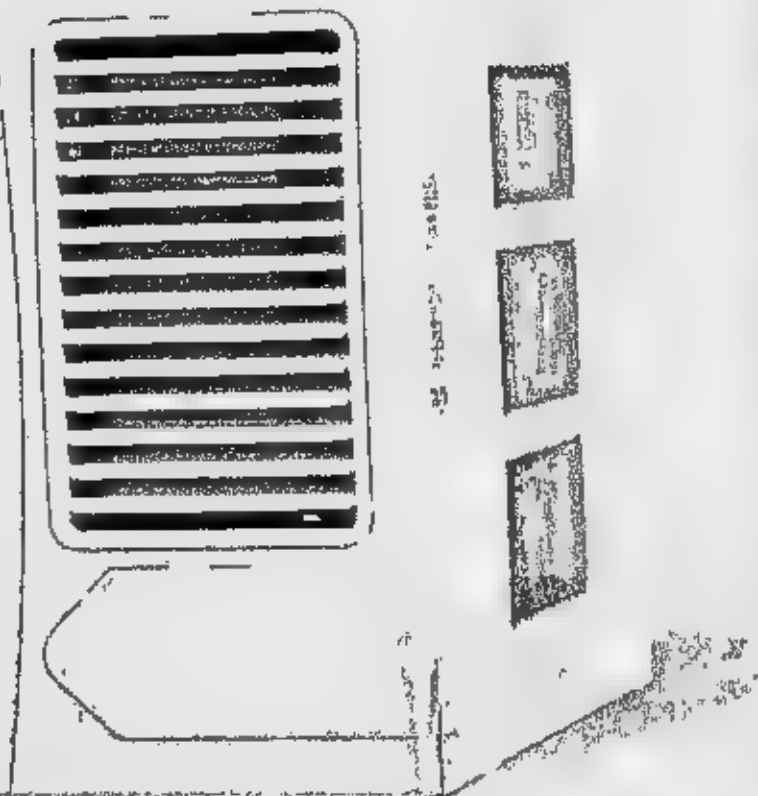
Only
P12*
a day tops!

*Approximate daily electricity cost based on current generation charges on a four-hour average usage time.

That's how little it costs to run your Sanyo air conditioner to give the cooling level you desire.



Model SA-186P



Safety electric shock protector • Low noise compressor • Aluminum fins on condenser & evaporator
• High current protector • Washable air filter • Double insulation AC cord

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Angela (045) 886-8080 / 8288623	Commonwealth 861-8678/8961	Gapan (044) 486-7648	Lotus (046) 515-5748/51	Plaridel (044) 796-3271	Sta. Rosa (049) 534-4680/4619
Avonit 752-2315 to 17/19/20	Congressional 827-9390/9520/9561	General Trias (046) 419-1148/1150	Lucena (042) 373-0443/46	Quezon City 724-2570/2581/2581	St. Francis 833-1362/84
Batangas (043) 723-8790/0834/1472	Desmarines (046) 418-2104-1144/5287	Glorietta 1 818-8453	Makati 812-2882/1584	Riverbanks 941-5003/5191/5180	Verde (045) 985-1278/1253
Bilan (049) 411-4611	Dau (046) 892-4285 (045) 812-4130 (046) 524-0268	Harmon Plaza 521-8560/89/83/84	Malabon 287-0478/0344/9832	Rosario (048) 438-8457	Yayaman 262-5787/88/89
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Cebu 2 881-5301 to 05	Farmers 911-1103/1494	Las Pintas 872-0578/77	Misamis 722-1264/4187 721-0580	San Pablo (049) 682-8242	LCC-Legazpi (052) 480-7949
Colonia (019) 545-7034/35	Filinvest 850-3776 842-2951	Libis 687-1613/1698	Posig 658-8843/47	Shangri-La 838-8017/1818/4980	LCC-Naga (054) 473-6003
			Showeroom 631-5188		Pacific mall-Legazpi (052) 480-6766

BEAT THE SUMMER HEAT WITHOUT BEATING UP YOUR WALLET! SAVE Extra with these useful Energy Saving Tips.

While there seems to be no end to the rising cost of electricity, you don't have to spend that much to get the cooling comfort you want from your air conditioner.

1. Replace your Old Air Con Unit

It is better to replace air con units manufactured 10 years or older. NEW air con units are made to be more efficient. On a typical IHP unit, the energy consumed by a new air con is estimated to be 31% less than that of an old unit. The long-term savings in electricity will cover the cost of a new unit!

UNIT	Kilowatts per Hour	ANNUAL RATE
OLD air con	1.33 KW/hr	P 38,304
NEW air con	1.00 KW/hr	28,800
		SAVE up to P 9,504/year in your electric bill!!!

2. If your Air Con has a Chronoswitch and Energy Saving Plug, use it!

Some window room air conditioners have special devices such as a Chronoswitch and Energy Saving Plug (ESP). The Chronoswitch is a programmable timer that allows you to set the aircon to turn on and switch off at your desired time and intervals. With an Electric Fan connected to the Energy Saving Plug, the fan will turn ON when the air con is OFF (and vice versa). You can reduce the running time of your air con without giving up cooling comfort and convenience and you save as much as 40% on your electricity consumption. (Estimated Savings of P 960/month). If your air con doesn't have a Chronoswitch and ESP, maybe it's about time that you get one

3. Turn your Aircon for 1 Hour Less

What's one hour less? It's about 13% savings that is estimated to be P 300 saved per month for a typical 1-hp air con! Besides, the residual coolness in the room will keep you comfortable just long enough before the time that you have to get up anyway.

4. Adjust the Thermostat 1 Degree Higher than Usual

The cooler the room has to be, the harder the air con has to work and the more power it needs. One degree higher isn't much; you might not even notice the difference. What you will notice are savings as much as 3% - SAVE up to P 864/year!

5. Clean and Maintain your Air Con Regularly

Dirt buildup and unbalanced refrigerant charges will decrease your air con's efficiency. Keeping it in tip-top shape could save you as much as 3% - and SAVE up to P 864/year!

If you follow these tips, you can enjoy the cooling comfort and convenience provided by an air con without hurting your wallet!

*A public service message from the largest air conditioning company in the country CONCEPCION-CARRIER AIR CONDITIONING and ABENSON, The No. 1 Retail Appliances store in the country today. Figures are based on a study made for Air Con users. Applicability may vary

kolin

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Aircons • LED Color TVs • DVD

SYNTAX

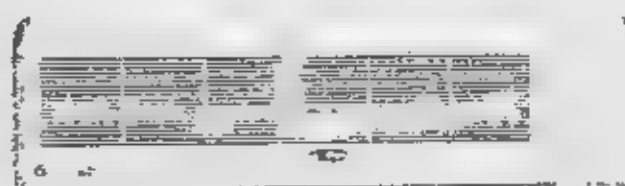
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A WHISPER OF PURITY



ASK 24
2.5 hp

Set yourself free. Relax to a rejuvenating chill only Whirlpool's Whispure Split-Type Airconditioner can give you. Break free from the soot and grime of the urban jungle and breathe in cool air that is fresh and therapeutic at the same time. With its Ionizer Filter, 6th Sense technology, and Jet Mode function, relaxation is more than just a luxury.

Whirlpool's Whispure Split Type Airconditioner. It's a heavenly experience.

Also available in 1.0, 1.5, and 2.0 horsepower.

Enjoy free installation* and zero interest for 8 months for every purchase of a Whirlpool Split-Type Airconditioner.

*Back to back installation up to 20 ft only.



IONIZER FILTER

Refreshing negative ions are released in the air to kill bacteria, eliminate many allergy causing particulates, and clear the air of smoke and other unpleasant smells, thus purifying and freshening the air you breathe.



6th SENSE

Whirlpool 6th Sense sensor control has "Intelligent" sensors that detect temperature changes and make adjustments to preserve optimum cooling conditions. 6th Sense technology also saves energy by only cooling when needed.



JET MODE FUNCTION

Whirlpool Split Type air conditioners feature a Jet Mode function, which is used to start or stop fast cooling. In Jet Mode, you can cool a hot, average-sized room in a matter of minutes.

Showrooms: Alabang C/F Alabang Home Depot, Lot 183-117 Alabang Zapote Road c/c Filinvest Avenue, Westgate Alabang, Muntinlupa City, 771-1273 • Cebu 3/F Sogo Home and Office Center, Ayala Avenue, Cebu Business Park, Cebu City, (932) 232-1801 • Makati 3/F Aron Esplanade, Pasay Road, Makati City, 841-5046 • Ortigas 2/F Automatic Center, Ortigas Home Depot, Julia Vargas Avenue, Ortigas Center, 675-5018 • Quezon City 827 D. Luzon St. c/c L. Castillo St., Quezon City, 732-7370 loc 101-103



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ABENSON Cool Summer

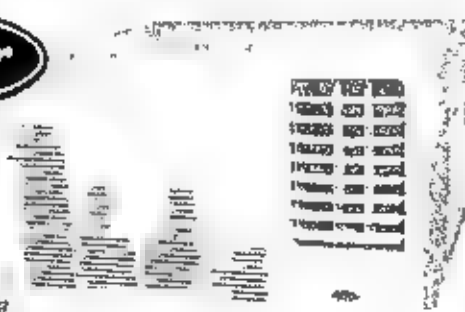
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GADGET GRAZZE

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Shangri-la Mall,
March 31 to April 9, 2006

Shangri-La Plaza

Carrier



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WKELH006EA
1 HP
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Deals!**

Melvinator



WKELH006EA
.5HP
Manual
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KAG-08ME
.75HP
Manual
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LANSON



AW-07P1HBA
.75HP
Manual
SRP \$2,020

LG



LA050MG
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Manual
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Timer
SRP \$1,799

Carrier



WCOND006EA
.5HP
Manual
SRP \$1,649

LG



LG LA100MG
1 HP
Timer
SRP \$2,599

Panasonic



CW-SC92JPH
1 HP
Manual
SRP \$3,499

Panasonic



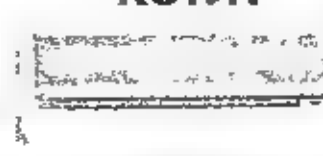
	HP	EER	PRICES
CS/U-PC9EKQ	1	11.1	21,999
CS/U-XC12EKQ	1.5	11.5	40,999
CS/U-C18EKQ	2	11.2	36,599
CS/U-C24EKQ	2.5	9.8	40,799

Carrier



42EXP008	1	10.5	27,165
42KCE012	1.5	10.1	25,115
42EXP020	2	11.7	38,440
42KCE024	2.5	10	39,875

kolin



KSG-10B1	1	11.5	19,075
KSG-15B1	1.5	11.5	23,200
KSG-20B1	2	9.5	30,230
KSG-25B1M	2.5	9.7	37,480

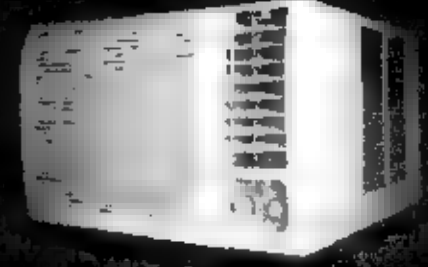
*Terms and conditions apply

0% applicable on selected items provided monthly bill is paid in full. Subject to bank approval. Pictures may vary from actual items. Promotional period: March 15-April 30. Per DIF-NCB Permit no. 1655 Dates of 2006



The better choice is now even better.
And this is for keeps.

Our aircons
are made
with the exclusive
DURA-LAST technology.
With optimized
anti-rust design,
your **CONDURA**
will remain rust-free
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The better choice made even better.

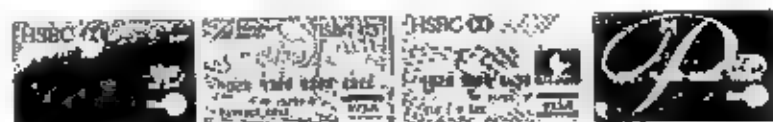
ABENSON Cool Summer

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Abenson offers 0% Interest Instalment plans through HSBC and is available to all HSBC credit card holders. It ensures total customer satisfaction by giving the consumer a chance to enjoy the new product, without worrying about his or her budget. In fact, there will be a 17-Day Promo in all Abenson Branches from March 24 to April 9, 2006, where HSBC credit cardholders could avail of exclusive light and easy instalment deals at 0% Interest payable over 4 Months on all major appliances and 8 or 14 months on selected appliances.

Promo Period: March 24 - April 9, 2006

* HSBC's Instalment Plan terms and conditions apply

Per DTI-NCR Permit No. 1463 Series of 2006

LG Named Global No. 1 Air Conditioner

For six consecutive years since 2000, LG Electronics' air-conditioner was proclaimed GLOBAL No. 1 by the Japan Air-Conditioning, Heating and Refrigeration News (JARN). In the banner story of its latest newsletter publication released worldwide to over 300 countries, LG Electronics remained on top of its competitors by posting a high 45% difference in global sales over its nearest competitor.

LG Electronics' air-conditioner has also posted 10 million units sales for two consecutive years since 2004.



Local Recognitions and Awards

Similarly, LG Electronics Philippines received two distinguished commendations and awards from the Consumer Group Philippines and the Union of Consumer Watch in October and November, 2005 respectively.

GOLD FIN Technology

Since the mid-1990s, LGE air conditioners have remained the top choice by consumers around the world. LGE boasts of breakthrough and pioneering technologies which have been the driving force behind LGE's success in the air-conditioning industry.

Among its key features, and unique only to LGE air conditioners, is the GOLD FIN Anti-Rust Coating Technology. LGE Gold Fin is a coating of a layer of gold on aluminum and applied on every LGE air-conditioning unit to prevent corrosion and keep the unit's appearance and performance staying as good as new.

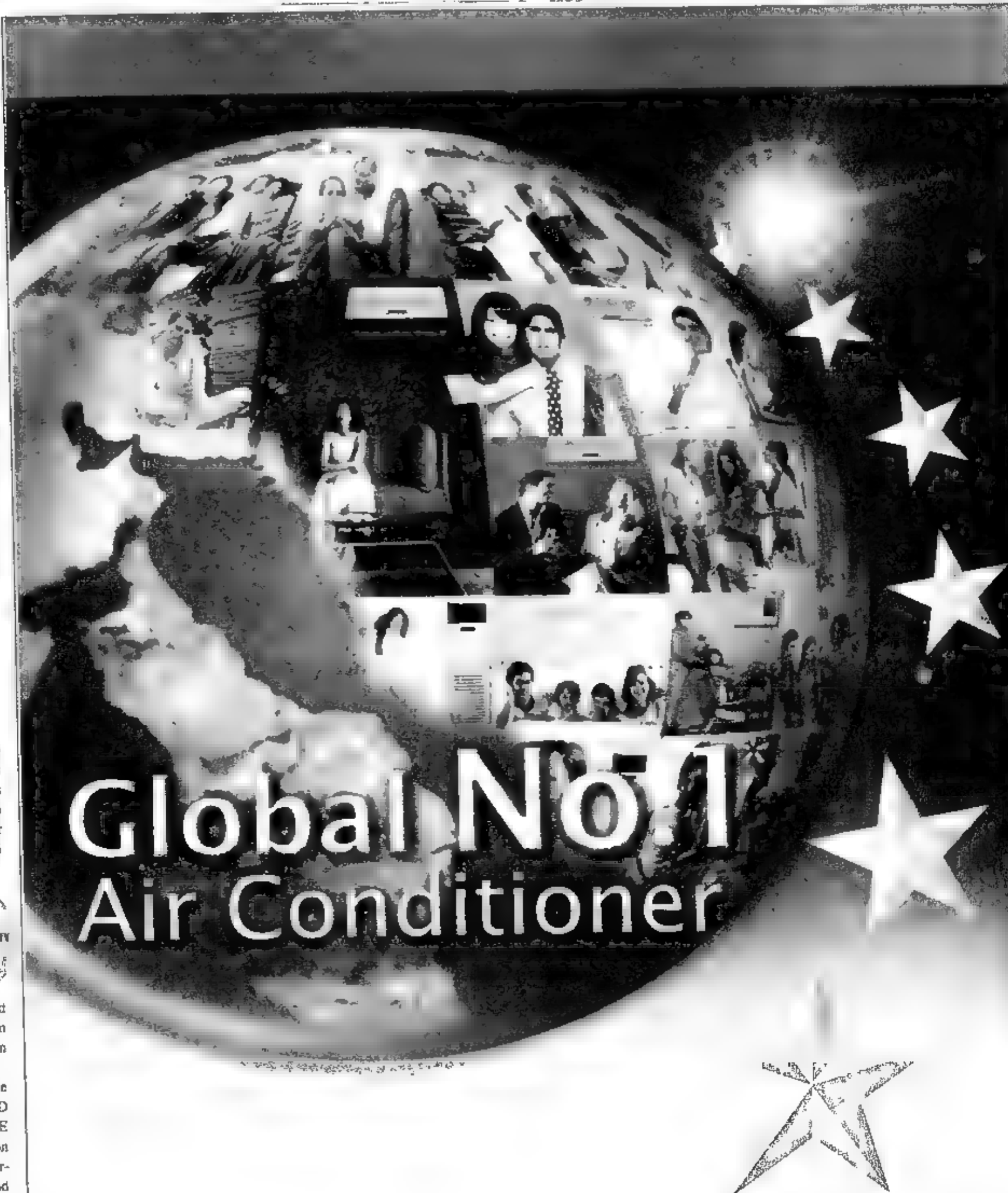


5-on-5
Warranty
All purchases of LGE air-conditioners come

with a full 5-year coverage which includes a 5 year coverage on not just the compressor but four other parts that include the condenser, evaporator, adjoining tubes and connectors.

More innovations from LGE

In late October 2005, LGE unveiled its new MPS environment-friendly inverter system, the "Multi-V Plus" and "eco V". The environment-friendly MPS (Multi-Power System) inverter system, the first of its kind in the Philippines, uses environment-friendly refrigerant "R-410A" which does not destroy or harm the ozone layer. The relevant market for the new product is rapidly increasing in accordance with Indoor Air Quality management laws that took effect in early January 2006, and the implementation of the Housing Performance Grade Marking System.



Global No. 1 Air Conditioner

***OVER 10 MILLION UNITS SOLD WORLDWIDE.**

LG is the Global No. 1 air conditioner for 6 years running.

LG does more than cool air. More than 27,000 daily new owners worldwide are benefiting from its High Energy Efficient Ratio (EER), thus more savings on electricity consumption.

Life's Good. And LG makes it happen for you.



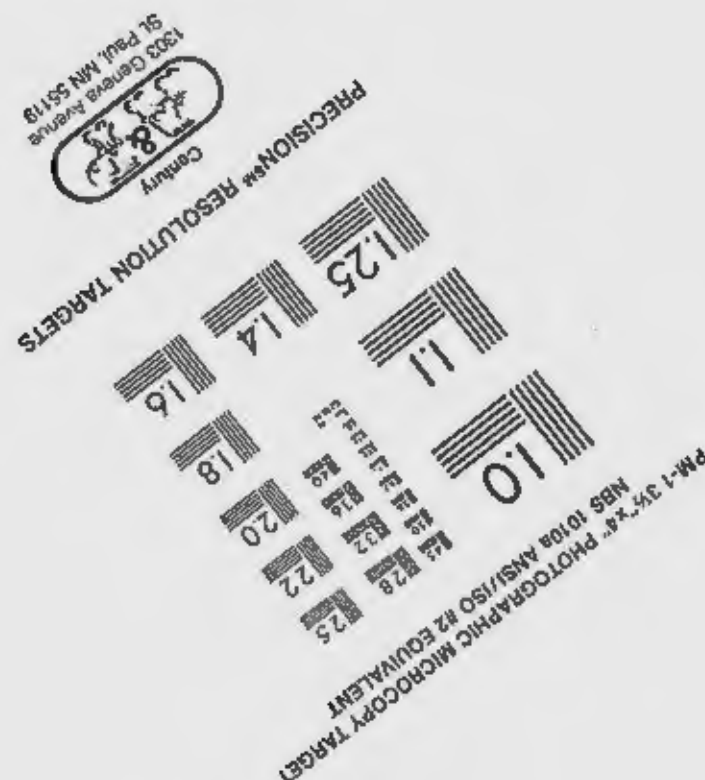
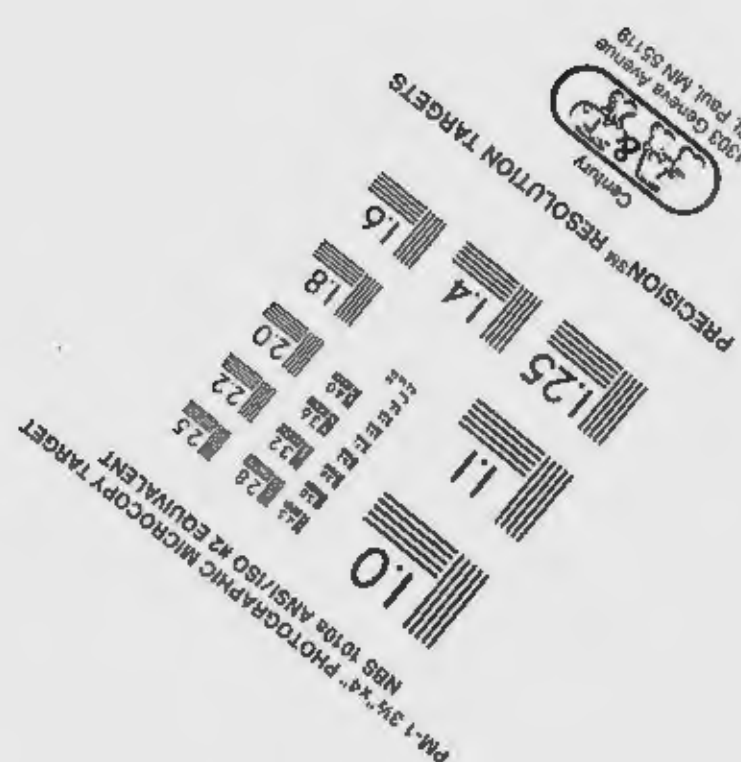
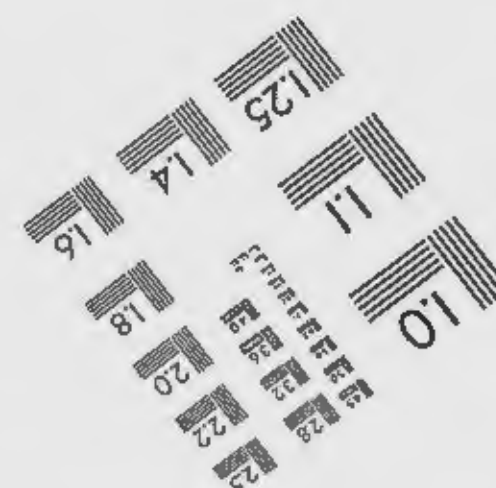
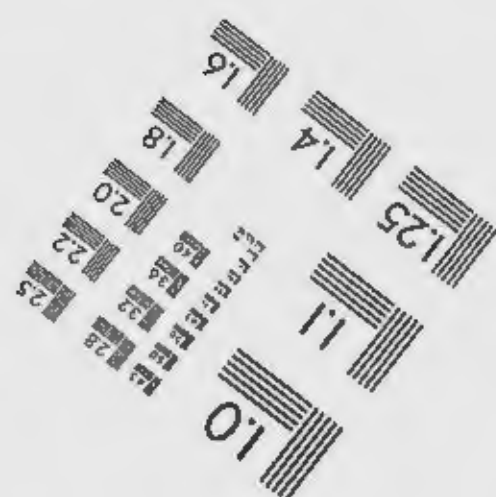
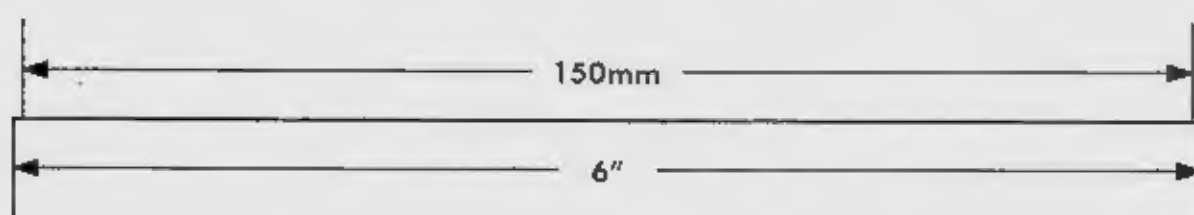
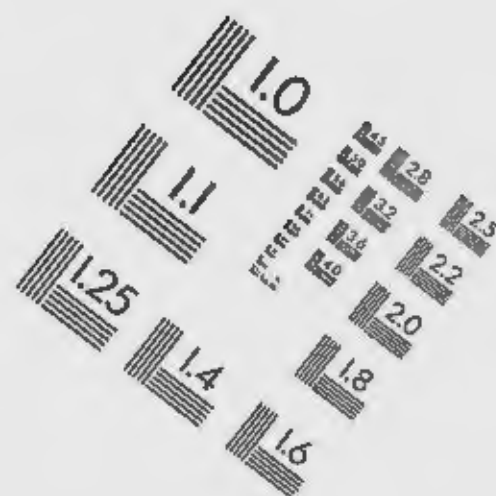
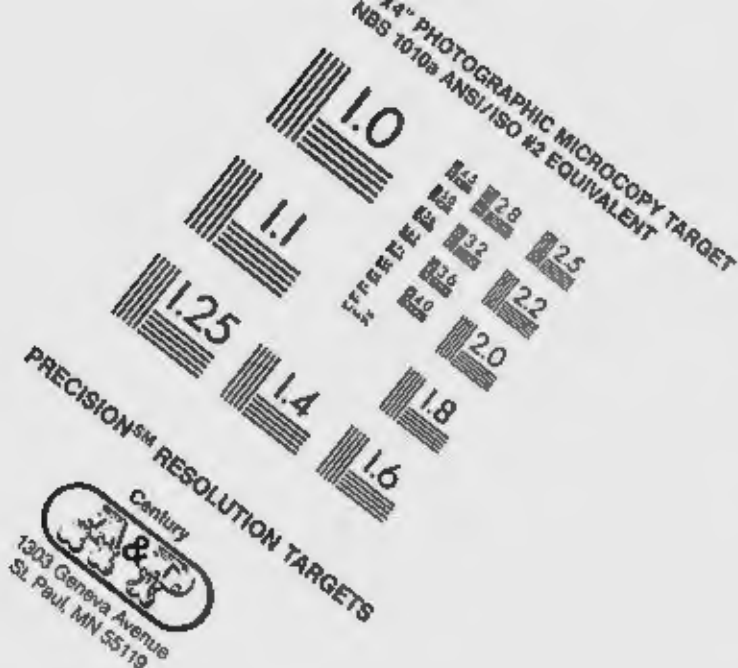
* According to Japan-based Fuji Keizai Eiji Economic Research Institute, LG sold approximately 10,500,000 units of air conditioners, taking up the largest market share in the approximately 60,420,000 unit-size industry. Research results of Fuji Keizai are published annually as JARN Japan Air Conditioning, Heating & Refrigeration News.

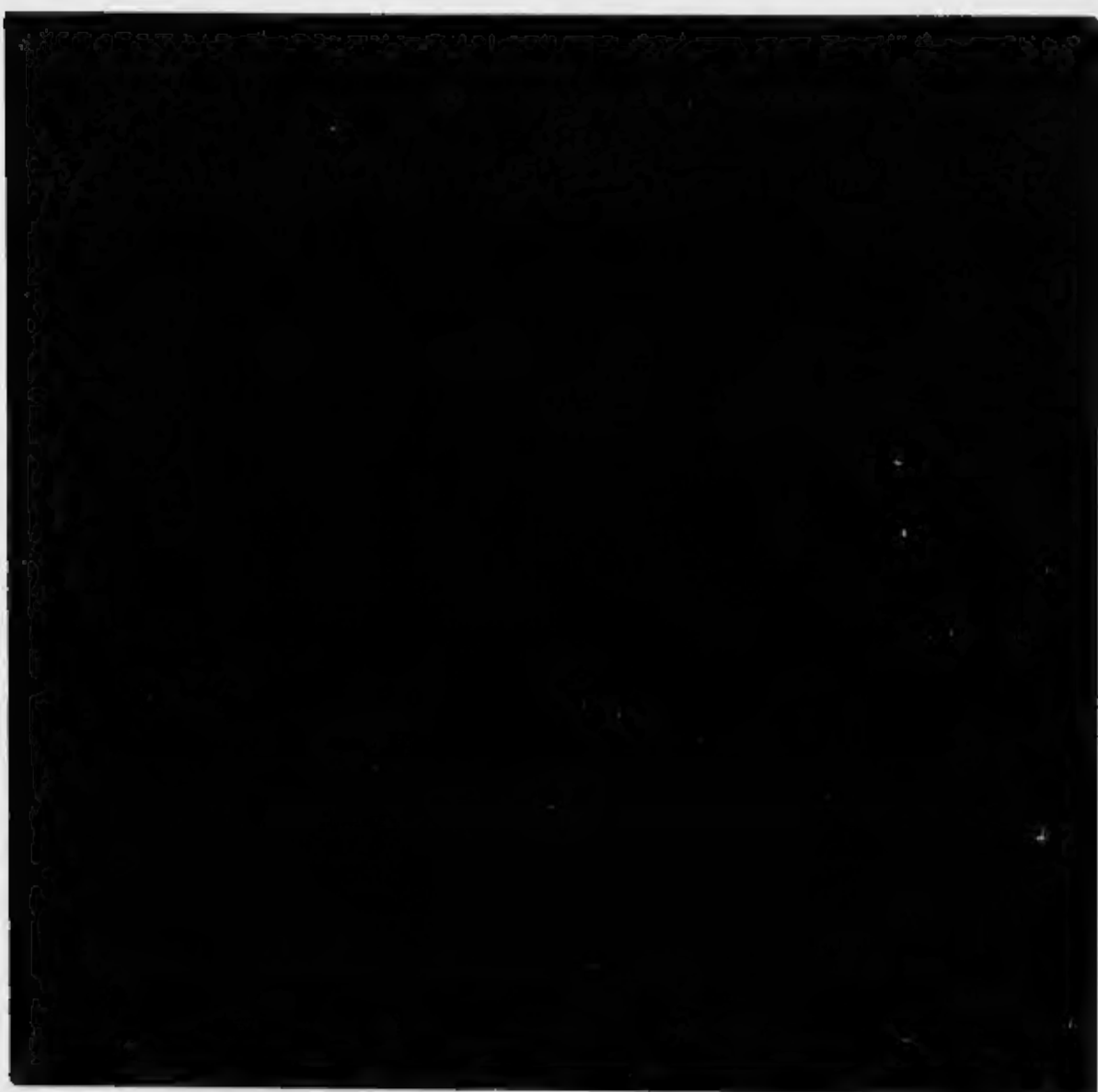
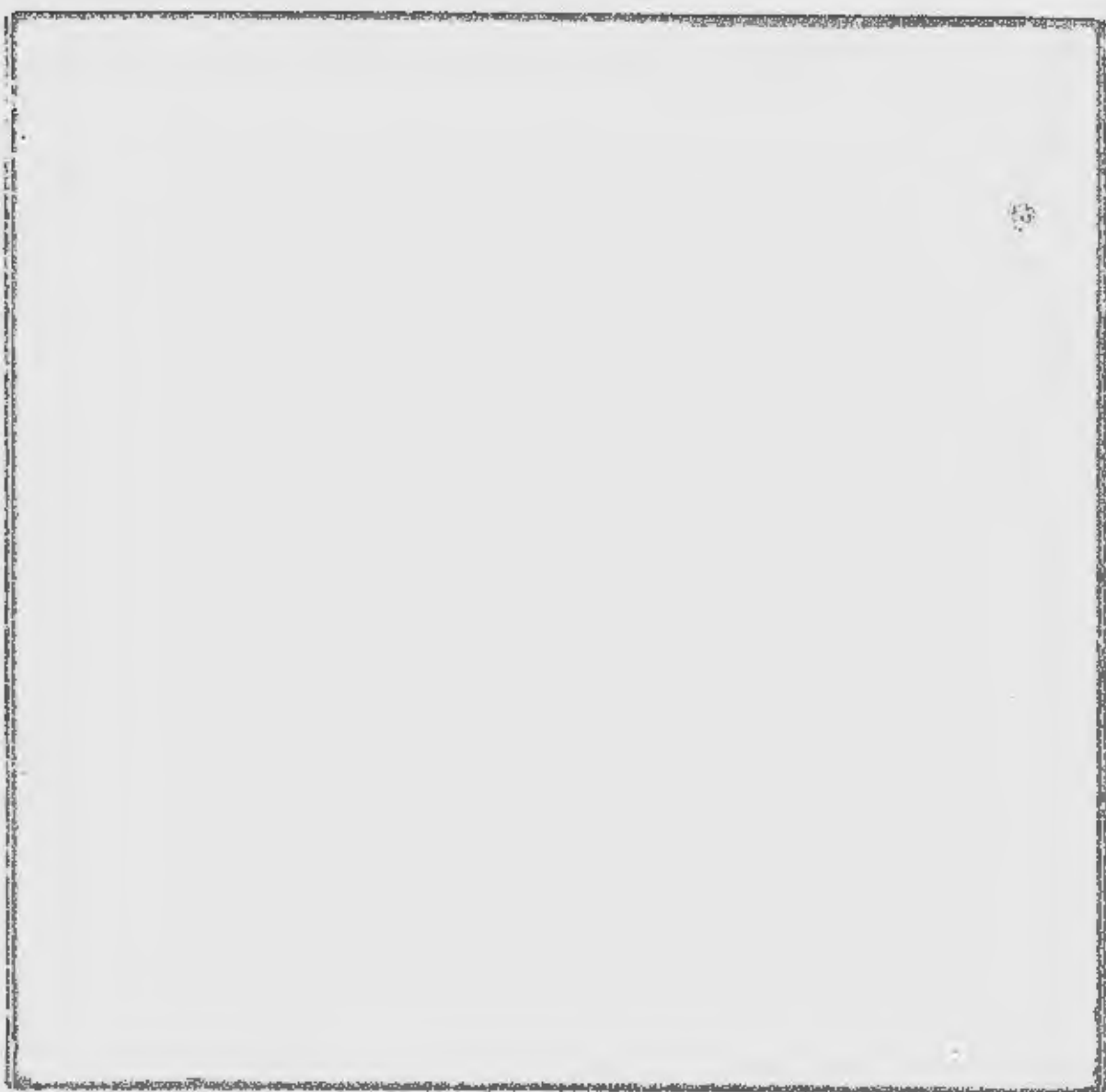
LG Electronics Philippines No. 15 F Legaspi St., Marikina, Pasig City • Tel. Nos. 641-4181 to 85 Fax Nos. 640-0406, 641-9446 C/C Hotline 640-2525 0917-8242525 0920-9002525

<http://ph.lge.com>



ARTCOOL Series
(Split Type)





**PHILIPPINE
DAILY INQUIRER
MANILA, PHILIPPINES**

**MARCH
16 THRU 31
2006**

REEL

377

END

PLEASE REWIND